

# LORD<sup>of</sup> the RINGS™

## ADVENTURE GAME



middle  earth™





ost like a spider she was, but huger than the great hunting beasts, and more terrible than they because of the evil purpose in her remorseless eyes . . . Great horns she had, and behind her short stalk-like neck was her huge swollen body, a vast bloated bag, swaying and sagging beneath her legs . . .”

“Sam sprang in, inside the arches of her legs, and with a quick upthrust of his other hand stabbed at the clustered eyes upon her lowered head. One great eye went dark.”

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers*, page 425-428\*

## • READ THIS FIRST! •

Welcome to Middle-earth! As a valiant Dwarven Warrior or an intrepid Elven Bard, you'll confront the most perilous foes of Tolkien's world and delve into the deepest mysteries. Listen well to the advice of Gandalf and Aragorn before you dare the wrath of the Necromancer and his minions. A fate worse than death awaits the unprepared!

The *Lord of the Rings Adventure Game*™ is a fun, easy-to-learn introduction to fantasy role playing. FRP games have been around for many years, but most of them require hours of study before you can understand enough to start playing. *LOR* is different! A few minutes of reading presents the essentials, and then you're ready to begin. You'll master the finer points of role playing, as the adventure unfolds, amidst all the wonders of Middle-earth.

### What's Inside the Box?

You'll find the following components inside your *Lord of the Rings Adventure Game*:

- **A Complete Adventure** — “*Dawn Comes Early*” lets you learn the rules as you play.
- **Color Map** — Follow your adventurers in their travels through Tolkien's world on this map of Middle-earth. It also makes a great poster!

- **Adventure Map** — The map of Bree-land shows adventure sites for “*Dawn Comes Early*.”
- **Floorplans & Characters** — Remove the staples from the booklet. You'll refer to the floorplans during the course of your adventure. Each player will choose one of the characters to play.
- **Playing Pieces** — A sheet of standup figures contains your characters and the people and beasts you'll encounter during your first adventures in Middle-earth. To assemble the figures, use a scissors to cut along the lines. Then fold each one in half (to show front and back) and place it in the plastic stands also in the box.
- **Dice** — You'll use a pair of 6-sided dice while playing the *Lord of the Rings Adventure Game*.
- **Rules** — *The Guidelines* are a short and snappy summary of all the rules (or guidelines!). You'll be mastering these almost without knowing it as you play the adventure “*Dawn Comes Early*.”

Once you've familiarized yourself with the components of *LOR*, you're ready to begin. Open “*Dawn Comes Early*” and start reading. Adventure is just around the corner!

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# The Adventure Goes On!

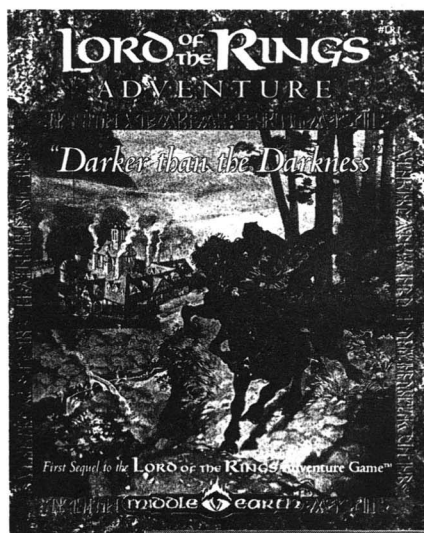
Look for these sequel adventures when you're ready for more excitement. Five linked scenarios for the *Lord of the Rings Adventure Game* take you into the Trollshaws and across the Misty Mountains to sinister Mirkwood.

**"DARKER THAN THE DARKNESS"** contains two scenarios for several evenings' worth of fun. Travel east of Bree for a chilling confrontation on the downs. Then challenge the Bandit-king who rules the Great East Road.

**"OVER THE MISTY MOUNTAINS COLD"** begins the second trilogy of adventures. Brave the Stone Giants of the peaks, and explore long forgotten Dwarvish ruins.

**"BEFORE THE GOBLINS"** introduces your characters to the Beornings of the Anduin Valley. Can you discover the secret behind the Goblin raids directed at their manor?

**"GREATEST OF THE FORESTS"** is the triumphant conclusion to the saga begun in *"Dawn Comes Early."* The shadows of Mirkwood hold denizens far crueler than your worst nightmares!



## And On!

What if you've played all the scenarios in the *Lord of the Rings Adventure Game* and you're aching for more Middle-earth stuff? Don't despair! There's plenty more material at ICE.

**LORDS OF MIDDLE-EARTH VOLUME I** puts at your fingertips the personalities, histories, and gear of the greatest and most powerful beings of Professor Tolkien's creation. This first volume of a three-part series details the Immortals: Elves, Maiar, and Valar. Sauron of Mordor, Gandalf the Grey, and Galadriel are all present.

**LORDS OF MIDDLE-EARTH VOLUME II** details the Mannish races — the Kings of Gondor, Aragorn, the Witch-king of Angmar and Éowyn who slew him, and all the deadly Ringwraiths.

**LORDS OF MIDDLE-EARTH VOLUME III** completes the three-volume set. It compiles a host of races: Hobbits, Dwarves, Orcs, Trolls, and Ents. Frodo, Bilbo, Sam, and Gimli are but a few of the famous and infamous included.



**MIDDLE-EARTH ROLE PLAYING, Boxed Edition**, is the complete role playing system for the experienced gamer looking for a more complex, exhaustive set of rules. If you liked *Lord of the Rings Adventure Game*, but now want to know more about races, magic, and monsters, this is the perfect next step up! **MERP** contains a 128-page rulebook, a 32-page adventure booklet, an additional 16 pages of maps and layouts, full-color stand-up characters, and dice.



# TOLMAN GREENTHUMB



*Race:* Tolman is a Hobbit.

*Profession:* He is a Scout.

*Nickname:* His nickname is Tom.

*Special Ability:* Tolman can find lost items or people more easily than average, so long as the circumstances of the loss are described to him. He receives a bonus of +2 to any skills he uses while tracking a missing thing or person.

*Item:* His dagger possesses a polished nugget of turquoise as its pommel, and white silk cord wraps its hilt. One angular rune is inscribed on its blade. The weapon adds +1 to its wielder's *Melee OB* when he uses it in combat. Tolman received the blade as part of his reward for locating a missing document for the Brandybucks of Buckland.

*Home:* Tolman lives with his sister in a smial (Hobbit-hole) in Bree.

*Family:* Tolman's sister is his twin (fraternal, not identical) and is named Lily. Their mother, Rose, recently died of illness. Their father, also named Tolman, was killed by lightning when both children were toddlers.

*Friends:* Gláin is a male Dwarf Warrior from the Blue Mountains. Rilwen is female Half-elf Scout from Rivendell. Tatharína is a female Human Bard who lives in Bree.

*Livelihood:* Tolman makes his living as a Finder, a person who finds missing people or things.

Tolman Greenthumb is a Hobbit of the Fallohide strain. His hair is the rare (among the Halflings) golden hue that gleams in the sun like jewelry or coinage, and his eyes are blue in some lights, grey in others. His stature is slight (he measures just 3'4"), and his silhouette is missing the round tummy characteristic of so many of his kin. His mouth frequently turns up in a grin of delight (due to the funny shapes made by clouds, the trill of a thrush in the meadow, or almost anything), and his friends say that Tolman inherited his mother's sunny temperament. Certainly, he inherited little else.

Rose Greenthumb was the widow of an itinerant minstrel. She grew herbs in her garden and took in sewing from wealthier families. The sale of simples to Bree's healer, Fanuira, together with the piecework, enabled Rose to feed and clothe both Tolman and his twin sister Lily, but permitted them few luxuries.

As Tolman grew older, he discovered in himself an aptitude for finding things lost or misplaced. Being an enterprising youth, he supplemented the family income by charging acquaintances and neighbors for his services. His fame as a Finder par excellence grew with the years, and strangers from as far away as the western borders of the Shire frequently sought his help. Other, more peculiar clients approached the Hobbit less often.





Gláin Longstride, a young Dwarf from the Blue Mountains who occasionally passed through Bree while accompanying his father's trading caravans, once misplaced the letter of introduction that would give him access to Rivendell. Tolman discovered the rolled missive inside a folded umbrella stacked with the rolling pins of *The Prancing Pony*, the inn where Gláin was putting up for the night. The mystery of how the letter came to be stowed in such a place remains, but Gláin's commerce with the Elves desiring long knives for Scouts patrolling the Lone Lands prospered. Gláin took to visiting Bree for a noggin or two of ale with Tolman anytime the Dwarf travelled through the area.



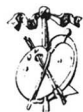
Rilwen, a restless Elf maid who wandered from her home in Imladris more than her friends thought seemly, encountered Tolman during one of the starlight rambles that the Hobbit infrequently enjoyed. She asked the Finder to locate the ring that had slipped from her finger sometime after the evening's first star appeared and sometime before the moon rose. Fashioned in the shape of a bluebell, the delicate band was a keepsake given Rilwen by her sister, now long departed for the Lands Undying to the West. Tolman discovered the ring tangled in the tongue of a very angry toad. Like Gláin, Rilwen also visits Tolman when she strays near Bree, although the Elf shares *miruvor* with the Hobbit in a woodland glade, rather than ale in a noisy tavern.

Two other of Tolman's friends deserve mention. Alaric, the son of a Riverman who plies the Brandywine River, met Tolman when the Hobbit visited Brandy Hall in Buckland. In search of the lost will supposedly hidden somewhere in the rambling smial by an eccentric and long dead individual named Reginald Took (the will was found between the leaves of an obscure text detailing the characteristics of the ash produced by different types of pipeweed), Tolman took time to retrieve Alaric's penknife. An extremely sturdy magpie had carried the blade to her nest in a secret attic of Buck Hall. Alaric has travelled to Bree only once, but Tolman seeks the young man whenever he arrives in a town on the Brandywine's banks.

Galfaroth, a taciturn man avoided by the Bree-landers, sought actively to prevent an acquaintance between himself and the Hobbit. As a self-appointed guardian of the Free Peoples inhabiting the lands that once comprised Arnor, the Ranger routinely faces rabid beasts, Orcs, and other nasties roaming the wilds north, east, and south of Bree. He can be a dangerous person with whom to pass the time, since his foes often seek vengeance. Luck and Tolman's gregarious personality conspired against Galfaroth's reticence.

One morning, just after sunrise, the Ranger lost his left boot to an overly bold racoon. The furry bandit fled out of sight while his victim hopped up and down cursing and laughing. Tolman, out for a dawn stroll, came upon Galfaroth in his comical plight. Finding the racoon's den was not difficult, nor was persuading the creature to relinquish the boot. However, Galfaroth abandoned his reserved demeanor (it's hard to remain dignified after being discovered helpless with laughter) and consented to smoke a bowl of pipeweed with Tolman. The two frequently meet by a wild apple tree in the outskirts of the Chetwood to exchange news.

Tolman's strange profession as a Finder proved adequate to support both Lily and Rose when the latter fell ill one winter. She grew weaker with the passing of each month, and the springtime blossoms came only in time to grace her grave. Tolman still smiled at the vagaries of wind and wild life, but his eyes held a new hint of sadness in their depths. The cheer of his mother's laugh and the comfort of her merry eyes would never await the Hobbit in his smial again, and his heart knew well this truth.



# LILY GREENTHUMB



*Race:* Lily is a Hobbit.

*Profession:* She is a Scout.

*Special Ability:* Lily has an eidetic memory. She can remember perfectly any visual image that she has seen. She receives a bonus of +2 to her *Perception* skill when it is used for seeing (not for sounds, feeling the wind shift, etc.).

*Item:* Lily possesses a small, but accurate sling inherited from her father. It is constructed of ash and a resilient, rubbery substance from the South. When used to fire small stones, it increases the wielder's *Missile OB* by +1.

*Home:* Lily lives with her brother in a smial (Hobbit-hole) in Bree.

*Family:* Lily's brother is her twin (fraternal, not identical) and is named Tolman. Their mother, Rose, recently died of illness. Their father, also named Tolman, was killed by lightning when both children were toddlers.

*Friends:* Tatharína is a female Human Bard who lives in Bree. Gláin is a male Dwarf Warrior from the Blue Mountains. Rilwen is female Half-elf Scout from Rivendell.

*Livelihood:* Lily earns a living by painting watercolor paintings and selling them, by baking for *The Prancing Pony*, and by growing herbs for the town's healer.

Lily Greenthumb is a dainty Hobbit of still more diminutive stature (she stands but 2'8" tall) than her twin brother Tolman (Tom). Her honey-brown hair grows in wispy curls, and Lily usually ties it back in a ponytail with a blue ribbon to match her clear, blue eyes. Her complexion is pale — so smooth as to rival an Elf's fairness, claim her admirers. She has inherited her mother's genius with flowers, herbs, and growing things. Certainly, Rose Greenthumb left her daughter little else than a home and its adjacent garden. Married to a travelling minstrel and widowed young, Rose supported her offspring by selling herbs to the local healer, Fanuira, and doing sewing for the wealthier families in Bree.

Small Lily often helped her mother with the piece-work, but she never enjoyed plying a needle and grew to loathe it as other interests claimed her attention. Working in the garden, baking crumpets in the kitchen, and painting watercolor landscapes of the hilly terrain around Bree were all more enthralling activities than hemming handkerchiefs and mending torn shirts. Her mother released her from sewing more and more often as Lily grew older.

Barliman Butterbur, the proprietor of *The Prancing Pony*, began purchasing her crumpets, muffins, pies, and pastries for his inn at a handsome price. And Polo Ham-midge, the wealthiest Hobbit in town, commissioned a portrait of his youngest grandson after buying two of Lily's landscapes. Her artist's eye was well-developed, allowing her to memorize a scene or a face in one measuring look and then to reproduce its components perfectly on her canvas. (She possesses, in fact, an eidetic memory — that is to say, the ability to preserve a mental image so accurately that she recalls its details as if actually viewing it rather than dredging it up from past experience.)



Together with her brother, Lily ran many of their mother's errands. Visits to Brigida's cottage for thread or yarn, stops at the Reedpipe's Shop for needles, and trips to the mill for flour were but a few of the places to which the jolly pair walked or skipped. Excursions to Fanuira's rambling hospice were the strangest. The small stillroom where the healer prepared her remedies occupied a southern corner of the house, and musty or bitter smells vied with flowery and spicy odors throughout its interior. Fanuira herself was so bent by age as to resemble a Dwarf, and her raspy voice reminded Lily of sandpaper. After the old lady had bestowed a few pieces of candied orange peel on her, the Hobbit-maid realized that Fanuira's rugged exterior concealed a kind heart with a soft spot for children.



Despite the bonbons, Lily never looked forward to a call at the hospice until Tatharína came to stay with Fanuira. An orphaned Dúnadan lass, Tatharína begged the healer to take her as an apprentice. Fanuira needed little coaxing. The old woman's failing eyesight and Tatharína's obvious talent (displayed when she mended a lark's wing in the surgery) were sufficient to persuade her.

Lily made Tatharína's acquaintance three days after the newcomer arrived in Bree. Laden with a basket of freshly picked golden sorrel, she knocked on the dark panels of the walnut door and waited with a fast-beating heart. Mere seconds later (Fanuira usually required several minutes to reach the entry hall), a young girl with copper-colored curls and friendly hazel eyes stood smiling on the stoop.

"I've come to study under Fanuira and to serve as her helper." The girl's voice was clear and musical. "My name is Tatharína. And you must be Lily Greenthumb. Fanuira said she expected you either today or tomorrow."

Lily blushed and held out her basket. "Yes, Mother told the healer last week that these would be ready for harvest soon."

Fanuira appeared in the hallway behind Tatharína as the Hobbit-maid fell silent. "I'll take the sorrel, my dear. And here's a peppermint apiece for you both. Why don't you take Lily to see the fox cubs, Tatharína? They'll be needing another dropperful of milk soon."

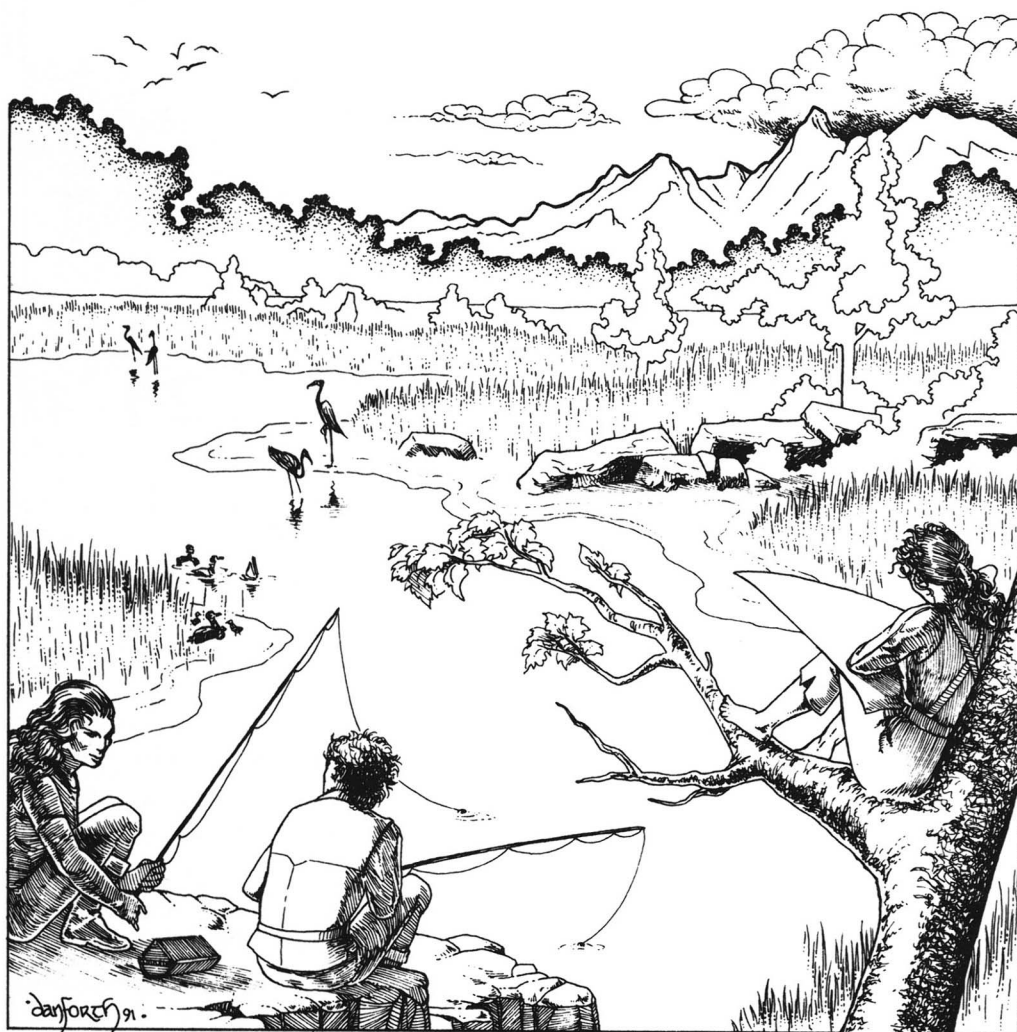
"Oh, thank you!" stammered Lily. "But mother is expecting me back to help embroider initials on a dozen neckcloths."

"And knowing that you'll be at least a quarter of an hour in my company. Come along inside, Lily," insisted the old lady.

Lily spent rather longer than fifteen minutes at the hospice. After she discovered that Tatharína detested sewing as much as she did, liked kittens (especially tabbies) better than dogs, and thought roaming the hills in a rainstorm to be famous fun, all her initial shyness was gone. The two fed the fox cubs together, looked at Tatharína's rock collection, took a skipping rope out

into the lane, and finished the afternoon playing hide-and-seek in the hospice attic. At teatime, Lily arrived home with several lame excuses on her lips, but Rose refrained from scolding. She'd learned several days ago of Tatharína's arrival and was unsurprised that a new playmate had distracted her daughter from her normally too-rigid sense of filial duty.

Tolman had been Lily's only close companion before Tatharína came to live with Fanuira. On all his expeditions to the Chetwood to find robins' eggs, to Crooked Crick for trout fishing, or to the southeast downs to enjoy their stiff breezes against his face, Lily tagged along, sketchbook under her arm. Whether they strolled in comfortable silence, chattered about Mother's funny new lace cap, or raced to be the first on the next hilltop, brother and sister were happy with one another's company.





# GALLIND



*Race:* Gallind is an Elf.

*Profession:* He is a Bard.

*Special Ability:* Gallind knows if any being in his vicinity (20' radius) is allied with the forces of darkness.

*Item:* The Elf possesses a harp named Vánalassë. It is carved of the bluish-silver wood of the Thônluin (S. "Blue-pine"). Strumming its strings adds a +1 bonus to its owner's *Magical skill*.

*Home:* Gallind dwells in Rivendell, the Elf-haven guarded by Elrond's strength.

*Family:* Gallind's mother, Lothiel, and his father, Airalin, have recently departed for the Undying Lands in the West.

*Friends:* Eärwing, Gallind's beloved, sailed West many years ago. Lauriel, a beautiful Elf with a lovely voice, dwells in Rivendell. Rilwen is a female Half-elf Ranger who also dwells in Rivendell.

*Livelihood:* Gallind is a skilled musician. He plays the wooden flute and the harp.

Silver-blond hair, shimmering like heavy silk, falls to Gallind's shoulders. His eyes are moss-green, and their gaze is dreamy. He is a Sinda Elf, and was born to parents of Elrond's household in Rivendell. Airalin, his father, tended the vineyards of white grapes that graced the valley's lower slopes, while his mother, Lothiel, grew flowers in the many borders surrounding the last homely house west of the mountains.

Gallind was unusual from the time of his birth. His eyes were not then softly unfocused, but blank and unmoving, as though he were blind. He responded not at all to sounds or touch. His caretakers ensured that he was warm, clean, and dry, as well as adequately fed. His mother sang to him, lilting airs about the streams and glens she so loved. His father held the infant, then toddler, then young child, in his arms and walked the paths of the valley, amidst breezes, bird calls, and plum blossom scents. Gallind remained unreachable, his awareness captured in some realm beyond the senses.

Lothiel's tears watered her flower gardens, and Airalin's lean face held shadows in its hollows. Gallind passed his seventh birthday, and no change occurred in his condition. Later that year, as he sat unmoving amidst the flickering sunlight in his nursery, an Elf-maid named Rilwen came to play by his side. She was the same age, to a day, but her lively chatter, laughing eyes, and graceful steps had delighted all in Rivendell as she grew. She knelt

some distance from Gallind, humming and braiding a strand of silk that would serve as a skipping rope when she finished.

Suddenly, Gallind's eyes focused on Rilwen's happy face, and he asked, "When you came to this valley, were the stars as bright as you wished them to be?"

She answered, "No, they were dimmer. One day I will travel further West, and the Stars there will rival the Sun and the Moon. Would you like to come with me to see the toadstools in a clearing in the woods?"

Gallind considered gravely. "Will they be red with white speckles?" he asked.

"They will," Rilwen replied. "But how did you know it? I thought you had refused to look about the valley until now."

"I have seen another landscape, and it was very beautiful." The shadow of pain mingled with joy passed across his face, pulling the lids down over his suddenly widened eyes. "Take me to see your woodland glade." Gallind rose to his feet and held out his hand. Rilwen took it in hers, and they departed the house together.

The Elves of Rivendell wondered and rejoiced at the end of Gallind's long retreat from the Middle Lands. The *míruvór* of that year was named for it. Lothiel sang a song about her son's capture by a dream and the joy his awakened eyes now brought to her heart. Airalin stood straight and foretold that Gallind's destiny would bring honor to his house. Alone among his people, Elrond allowed sorrow to touch his brow. "Gallind has looked on the Lands Undying. Though I celebrate our gain, I must grieve his loss."

Gallind, himself, grieved not at all. In Rilwen's company, he roamed the valley, watching larks take flight while the sun rose and dew glistened on the bending grasses. He fashioned a reed pipe and played tunes that set dancing the feet of anyone listening. Lauriel, an Elven lass of fifteen summers, followed the pair whenever the piper carried his pipe. Her voice was warm and golden, like her hair, and she sang and danced with subtle beauty to Gallind's clear, silver-toned music.

Years passed, the days occupied by idylls in the wilderland. Having awakened from lassitude, Gallind grew ever more vigorous, spending fewer and fewer hours lost in meditation or simple rest. He sought out Turlómath, the valley's most subtle master of the echoes that linger from the Song of the Ainur. The lad refused to leave the venerable Elf's side until promised tutelage in the weaving of enchantments. This was no simple feat,





since he found Turlómath absorbed in a search for the lost meaning of a word that would illuminate the secret theme of an obscure poem from the Second Age. Turlómath never even noticed Gallind's presence for the first six months. Only when he had deciphered the arcane phrase under his concentration, an entire year later, did he transfer his attention to his unacknowledged youthful companion.

"Your talent for persistence shows either extreme wisdom or utter foolishness, my son, depending upon the presence or absence of your talent for the unheard Harmonies." A faint smile glimmered in the austere grey of Turlómath's eyes.

Gallind heard long speech from his teacher, read ancient tomes at his behest, practiced unusual exercises in mental concentration under his instruction, and visited unnoticed spots in the valley upon his orders. Despite these pursuits, as well as the jolly excursions with Rilwen and Lauriel, which continued unabated, Gallind's days held room for yet more. One morning in winter, he beheld a maiden seated in a tower chamber and playing the lap harp. Her fingers were very nimble on the instrument's strings, and cascades of rippling sound flowed from their swift passage. Gallind stood entranced.

Her hair was the dusky color of evening shadows, braided in many thin strands and pinned by pearl knots to form intricate curves. Her eyes were grey, but their depths held hints of the sea — perhaps mirroring the blue-green folds of her gown. The bones of her face were fine and strong, an indication of the inner spirit expressed by her music. Yet Gallind noticed Eärwing's beauty only later. It was the harp's melody that touched his heart in this moment.

He listened while the sun rose in the sky until the noontide, when Eärwing stilled her hands and looked up to observe her rapt audience of one. Their eyes met, and she felt a strange lightness in her limbs — as though she floated in the waters of a mountain spring or drifted through the air like an autumn leaf. Gallind broke the silence. "Snowflakes tossed by Manwë's winds cannot rival the exquisite nature of your harp's song."

Thereafter, he strayed to the tower room every morning to hear Eärwing play. She awaited his coming eagerly, in the beginning, and her music flamed and flickered with unspoken happiness. A year passed, and still Gallind praised nothing more than the beauty of the sounds flowing from her hands. Themes of sadness and loss re-entered Eärwing's melodies, growing with time to drown the quivering notes of joy that had originally danced so playfully on the harp's strings. Gallind frequently left the tower with tears on his cheeks, but he never noticed that Eärwing's eyes were wet *before* she set her harp on her knee.

One day he asked the Elf maiden if she would teach him the ways of the harp. Eärwing's face lost all color — her lips and cheeks were nearly grey in hue. She did not

# TATHARÍNA

*Race:* Tatharína is a Beorning (Human).

*Profession:* She is a Bard.

*Special Ability:* Tatharína is extremely proficient in first aid. Any wound tended by her heals faster than normal: +1 point of damage healed per hour.

*Item:* Tatharína possesses a bracelet of braided, blue leather thongs. It was her father's. The bracelet adds +1 to the wearer's *Defense skill*.

*Home:* Tatharína grew up in Castle Noirins among descendants of Arthadan citizens. She currently resides in Bree with Fanuira, a healer.

*Family:* Tatharína's mother, Ailsintha Saljainfrath, died giving birth to her only daughter. The Bard's father, Occared Wiljair, was killed in an Orc raid.

*Friends:* Tatharína was raised by Eliana Hallowhand, the healer of Castle Noirins. Eliana died several years ago in a building accident. Fanuira became the girl's guardian and teacher. Lily Greenthumb, a female Hobbit Scout, and Tolman Greenthumb, a male Hobbit Scout, both live in Bree. Gláin, a male Dwarf Warrior, often passes through Bree on trips to and from the Blue Mountains.

*Livelihood:* Tatharína is a healer and an herbalist.

Tatharína is a Beorning, although she was raised in Castle Noirins among a people of Dúnadan descent. Her coppery red hair and hazel eyes, together with the less aquiline nature of her face, reveal her true heritage. She also feels a preference for fur cloaks and boots far exceeding that normally experienced by a northerly folk, but typical of the Bear-kin.

Her parents fled from their forest holding in Mirkwood for reasons unknown to Tatharína. Occared Wiljair, her father, was killed in an Orc raid during the journey across the Misty Mountains. Her mother, Ailsintha Saljainfrath, reached the one castle still intact and inhabited by folk whose ancestors were Dúnedain in Arthedain and Arnor of old. The healer there tended the laboring woman skillfully, but Ailsintha did not survive the night. The infant girl she gave birth to became an orphan with the first light of the dawn.

The healer, Eliana Hallowhand, tended the baby and named her Tatharína, Willow-crowned, for the sorrows that had already crowded her short life. Edwin Noirins, the young heir of the castle's Lord, thought it a famous joke, since red curls as bright as holly berries grew luxuriantly on Tatharína's head. As she grew older, the spoiled lad teased her with epithets such as Fox-fuzz, Holly-head, and Fire-thatch.

The castle folk grew used to seeing Eliana, in her stillroom preparing herbal remedies or setting the broken bone of a young page, with the baby secured in a wide sash around her waist. As a toddler, Tatharína followed her foster mother on her own uncertain feet while the healer moved about her daily tasks. Even Haronui Noirins, Edwin's uncle and the Lord of the Keep, came to think of Tatharína as Eliana's daughter. The healer was a young woman, of childbearing age, but she had chosen not to marry after her promised husband died of fever a mere month before the wedding was to take place.

Tatharína began to learn the art of gardening as soon as she could walk. Close by Eliana's side, she crouched between the rows of plants and uprooted tender shoots that would become great, strangling weeds if left alone. These were some of her favorite hours — the wholesome smell of the earth rising to her nostrils, the warm sun splashing light across her shoulders, and the healer's gentle voice guiding her with instructions phrased so lovingly as to be almost a caress.

In the autumn, after Eliana picked leaves and berries for drying, Tatharína gathered seeds from the garden and sorted them into labeled packets. When the snow fell, the pair worked in the stillroom, making tinctures, salves, and powders from the herbs harvested in the months before. Spring found the healer afield in the meadows that surrounded the castle plucking flowers whose petals had curative properties or leaves best picked in the early season, while Tatharína planted in the garden in the castle bailey. As the days lengthened, Tatharína accompanied Eliana on expeditions to the Merlewood, a copse of beech trees situated a morning's walk from the castle. There, they scraped a rare mold from the boulders scattered throughout the wood. Made into a powder, Hare's Barnacles would cure earache or chronic sore throat.

Thus, the years rolled by — autumn, winter, spring, summer. Tatharína became a tall, slender girl with a light sprinkling of golden freckles across her cheek bones and a smile that came readily to her lips. Her hair lightened to a pale copper, like the sky at sunrise. Edwin, now a lad on the threshold of manhood, ceased calling her insulting names and brought her a posy of bluebells and aster on the first day of Lothron (May).

Prosperity cloaked the castle like a festival garment. The crop harvests had been bountiful for the last ten years, wildcats and bandits had been scarce, and Eliana had challenged the two incursions of spotted fever so



successfully that only Jaran Clubhand had died of the disease. Haronui Noirins declared a feast day and announced in the midst of the celebrations his intention of adding a roof to the gate barbican. The merry-makers shouted their enthusiasm for the scheme and raised another toast to the wisdom of their noble Lord.

Accordingly, a work party of stalwart men repaired to the Merlewood to cut timbers for the new roof the next day. Progress ground forward slowly throughout the summer. The massive joists were chiseled from the felled beech trees, hauled to the castle, and lifted to the fighting top. There, long iron bolts secured them to the crenellated parapet. Masons constructed an overhanging gallery to allow defenders to fire directly downward onto attackers at the gate. Meanwhile, glass was blown and fitted into panes to create windows from the embrasures of the old, inner battlement. By autumn, the roof had been shingled, completing the spacious hall atop the barbican. The machicolated gallery outside it needed only the trivets, that would support kettles of boiling oil, to be finished.

The castle folk had good cause to be proud of their accomplishment, but a tragedy during the construction process overshadowed their joy. A beam slipped while being hoisted aloft to the fighting top and crushed Eliana Hollowhand beneath its weight when it fell to the bailey below. The healer was pulled from under the joist, still alive, and taken to the infirmary where she had returned to health so many stricken by illness or accident. Tatharina cared for her foster mother almost as skillfully as Eliana herself might have done. Salves were administered to her crushed pelvis, tinctures tipped down her throat at regular intervals, and her hands and forehead bathed with rosewater whenever sweat beaded on the healer's skin. Eliana did not recover. She closed

her eyes for the last time at eventide, just as the sun slipped below the horizon. Tatharina bowed her head and sat very still until the last light had faded from the sky.

The next several days were busy. Preparing for the burial and observing all the proper rites to honor the dead filled the hours. Only when the flowers, strewn on the earth where Eliana was buried, had wilted did Tatharina approach Lord Haronui with the healer's last request.

A dozen times during that long afternoon before death

came in the evening, the girl thought Eliana's spirit was ready to depart. Each time the healer dragged herself back to consciousness, whispering incoherently.

"What is it, Eliana? What can I do?" murmured Tatharina, anxious to relieve the failing woman's worry.

Finally the healer gathered sufficient breath to form intelligible words. "Tatharina, child. You've more talent than you know. But I know, I know. You must seek Fanuira Edhellammen in Bree. I learned from her as a girl. Promise me. Promise you will not waste your gift." Her face was anguished, and her eyes very bright.

Tatharina nodded her head. "Be easy, Eliana. I will obey your will." The end came fast after that.

Lord Haronui insisted on a word-by-word account of Eliana's request and Tatharina's promise. He would not stand in the way of the girl's departure if it were truly the healer's desire, but he had hoped that Tatharina might fill her foster mother's place in the castle. Not even the old crone living on the far edge of the Merlewood was so skillful with medicines.

Despite the Lord's reluctance to see her go, Tatharina never saw the completion of the fortification that had cost Eliana her life. Seated high on the baggage carried by a wagon in a trading caravan, the girl set out for Bree





## GLÁIN



*Race:* Gláin is a Dwarf.

*Profession:* He is a Warrior.

*Nickname:* He is often called Gláin Longstride for the many leagues he travels in pursuit of trade.

*Special Ability:* Gláin is unusually skilled at bargaining and negotiating agreement. His ability adds +2 to Gláin's *Perception bonus* when he is trying to persuade someone to do something his way.

*Item:* Gláin's favorite weapon is his battle-axe. It was a gift from Fróin. The weapon adds +2 to the wielder's *Melee OB* and delivers +3 damage (instead of the usual +2 done by battle-axes).

*Home:* Gláin's home is in the Blue Mountains. His family Halls are part of Merlost, the ruined remains of an ancient Dwarf delving called by the Elves: Belegost.

*Family:* Gláin's mother, Lís, is one of Thrár's Tribe. His father, Grálin, is of Dwálin's House.

*Friends:* Tolman (a male Hobbit Scout), Lily (a female Hobbit Scout), and Tatharina (a female Human Bard) are all residents of Bree.

Short (4'5"), stocky, and muscular, as is typical of Dwarves, Gláin possesses a stature well suited to a warrior. He is quick in combat, and swings his battle-axe with vigor. Yet, to the disappointment of his mother Lís, all his fights have thus far been within the practice halls of crumbling Merlost. His pride has not grown to the overweening proportions achieved by hers, nor has despair darkened his heart.

Upon her marriage to Gláin's father, Lís looked to her husband to restore the fortunes of her House. Although merely a cousin to Grár, upon whose shoulders weighed the Kingship of Thrár's Tribe, she brooded on the losses of her people. She blamed the Elves for the battle millennia ago that sunk the western lands of Middle-earth, bringing flood and earthquake to Tumunzahar, the once magnificent home of the Third Tribe of Dwarves. She remembered the bitter tale of the Nauglamir, the necklace forged by smiths of Tumunzahar and taken by the Elves at swordpoint.

Grálin's methods for bringing wealth to Dwarven coffers did not assuage his wife's hunger for vengeance and spilled blood. He was a descendant of Dwálin's House, and the glory of his forefathers did not haunt his dreams. Fair halls, a bountiful store of goods, and hope for the future were all he asked of life, and he was willing to work hard. Lís longed for battle, glory, and victory. He merely traded weapons and tools for gold and silver, some of it Elvish!

Lís spoke eloquently of armies gathered, alliances forged, and weapons stored for use by Dwarven warriors. Grálin held her hands firmly in his and captured her angry gaze. "Our armies are dead, our allies likewise buried, and our people few. Conquest will diminish our two Houses, not restore them. Let us, let me, try another way — less glorious, perhaps, but effective. With trade, peace, and time, we can lay the foundations that will allow our children's children to attain and surpass the splendor of the past."

Lís turned her head away and retired to her private chambers. Soon after, their son Gláin was born. On him she focused the full strength of her ambition. The Dwarven heroes of old strode across the stories she told him at bedtime. Tapestries of victorious battles adorned the walls of his nursery. His first toy was a golden rattle shaped to resemble a miniature battle-axe.





Grálin was often away during those early years, seeking new markets for tools, weaponry, and toys of Dwarf-make. When home from his travels, he spent his time by Gláin's cradle, dandling the baby and pulling his beard from his son's clutching fingers. The pair laughed and played long hours, uninterrupted by care or sorrow.

Lís locked her door during her husband's visits, refusing to emerge from her apartments until Grálin departed from Merlost on the next trading venture. In his absence, she continued the training that would make her son into the proud warrior who might one day restore honor to Thrár's Tribe.

Herself owning some skill in the arts of war, Lís carved a practice weapon of pine for Gláin, fitting its length and weight to the boy's reach and strength. He spent many days of each week swinging the blunt axe under his mother's supervision. Her glowering determination withered his first rebellion against the compulsory lessons, while her praise fanned his desire to excel. When she engaged Fróin to teach him mastery of more than the rudiments, Gláin was eager to learn.

Fróin served as Royal Counsellor to Grár in Nibbin-grod (old Nogrod) across the valley from Merlost, but his fame as a warrior in days gone by still lingered. When Gláin stood before him for his first lesson, Fróin dug a small suit of chain mail, a shield, and a battle-axe from the bottom of one of his chests. "These withstood Orc blades and Troll spears when I was a lad. Let them now teach you wisdom in the fray. Don the mail, and we'll begin!" The wizened tutor grabbed a larger, heavier weapon and took a warrior's stance.

Although frail with age, Fróin's expertise made him more than a match for his young pupil. From that first sparring match, Gláin dreamed of beating his teacher in a fair fight. Such a victory would place his prowess as a warrior beyond question. With a determination that rivaled his mother's, in strength if not in dourness, the youth committed himself to the years of practice required by such a goal.

Now when Grálin stopped at home between sojourns abroad, he found his son engaged in exercises (balance, footwork, strength, etc.) prescribed by Fróin while Lís watched his progress with a jealous eye. Gláin refused to leave the practice floor, even for his father, during the hours assigned to lessons. His mother was well pleased, since she remained ignorant of her son's choice to spend the remainder of his day with Grálin.

Years passed. Gláin grew stronger and more clever with his battle-axe. One day he defeated Fróin in a sparring match. Instead of jubilation at his success,

however, Gláin was surprised to find concern for the old man's brittle bones uppermost in his thoughts. Had he injured his tutor in this moment of victory? The prone Counsellor hopped to his feet with a snort. "I'm tougher than you think, boy, and you've a lot to learn yet! A fight to the death is a very different thing from a friendly bout on the practice floor. Now! Let's go over your footwork in that last bit. Very sloppy! Very sloppy, indeed!"

The review of Gláin's footwork was destined to remain incomplete. Grálin arrived at the great East Gate of Merlost blood-covered and exhausted. His caravan had suffered an attack by bandits. Thóri and Lóri, his companions on the trip, were dead. His right eye was a ruin, and an arrow protruded from his shoulder. Gláin hurried to his father's side, reaching him just as the injured Dwarf staggered and fell.

Grálin was long recovering from his wounds. Lís forgot her quarrel with her husband and nursed him tenderly, with Gláin as her assistant. When at last the invalid regained his health, both wife and son were resolved that Grálin should henceforth travel with Gláin at his side.





# RILWEN



*Race:* Rilwen is a Half-elf.

*Profession:* She is a Ranger.

*Nickname:* The "Shining Maid" is a fairly close approximation of the meaning of her name.

*Special Ability:* Rilwen always knows which way is north. Thus, she can always find trails, rivers, hills, and other terrain features when travelling across known countryside, and can follow perfectly a route she has mapped out in her head. In unknown areas, she can hold a course in a given cardinal direction perfectly.

*Item:* Rilwen possesses a pendant shaped to resemble a walnut. It permits the wearer to experience at will the sensations of plants and animals within a 100' radius — sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch.

*Home:* Rilwen first dwelt in the Halls of the Elven-king (Aradhrynd) in Mirkwood. She came to Rivendell as a young child.

*Family:* Merethiel, Rilwen's mother, is a Silvan Elf from Mirkwood. Her father, Cúforn, is a Dúnadan who was much honored by Thranduil. Her sister, Ránian, departed for the Lands Undying many years ago.

*Friends:* Lauriel, a joyous Elf-maid of Rivendell, always welcomes Rilwen with song when she returns from wandering. Tathariel of Lórien befriended Rilwen when she was a child. Gallind, a male Elf Bard, has a desire to travel to Mirkwood one day. Tolman, a Hobbit Scout, and Lily, also a Hobbit Scout, both live in Bree.

*Livelihood:* Rilwen is a naturalist. She is compiling a list of all the plants and animals of Endor.

Light glimmers in her grey-blue eyes, shimmers on her long flaxen hair, and lilts in her laughter. She is well named: Rilwen, the Shining Maid.

Half-elven, born of a Silvan Elf and her Dúnadan consort, Rilwen was an oddity in the halls of King Thranduil in Mirkwood. Being different never bothered her much. The habits of foxes and the habitats of pines or ash-trees interested her far more than the opinions held by her peers.

As soon as she could walk, Rilwen headed for the door of the woodland cottage where her mother and elder sister often escaped the crowd of Thranduil's court. Merethiel caught her daughter before she went far, and Rilwen laughed at the new game she'd discovered. Mother and daughter whiled away many afternoons in this play, but one day Merethiel allowed Rilwen to reach the doorway and pass through it. Dappled sunlight on moss carpets, toadstool rings, and bluebells met her wide-eyed gaze. A purple-winged butterfly flitted across the glade to land on the nose of a surprised squirrel. Rilwen clapped her dimpled hands in delight.

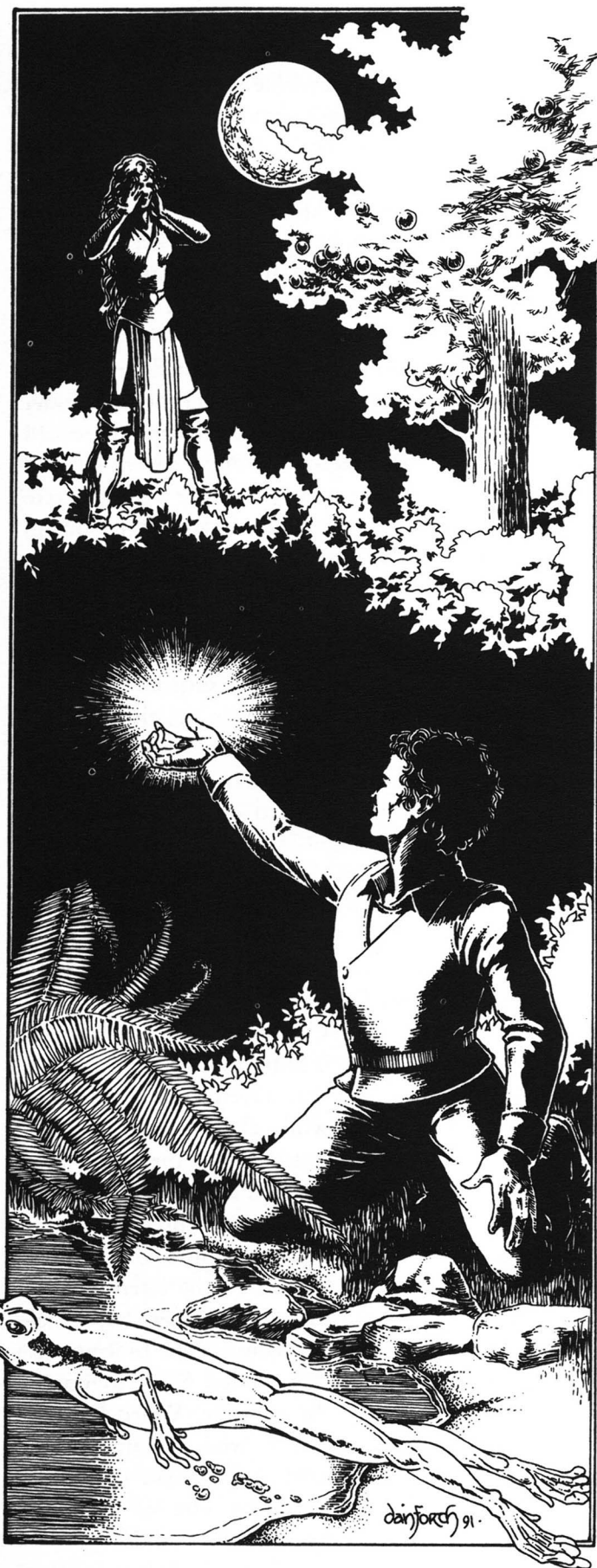
Merethiel and Ránian enjoyed many a stroll through the forest with small Rilwen between them. While they marveled over the beauty found in a cascade illuminated by slanting rays of sunlight, their young companion wondered whether the trout in the brook really breathed water and if the lilies had small boats beneath their petals.

In her fifth summer, she met a friend who could answer some of her questions. Tathariel brought messages from

Galadriel of Lórien to Thranduil of Mirkwood and stayed for several weeks while the Elven-king composed his answers. The stranger avoided the court of Aradhrynd, preferring the company of two or three friends to the attentions of many. She met Merethiel and Ránian one morning as they sallied forth to watch the sun rise. When Rilwen asked what clouds were made of, Ránian said they were the gift of Manwë, Lord of the Winds.







Tathariel answered, too. "Indeed, gifts of Manwë, but composed of water vapor, like the mist that rises at the base of a waterfall."

All the next month, Rilwen followed Tathariel about like a shadow. She learned that fishes' gills extracted air from the water in which they swam, that moss grew on the north side of trees because it needed moisture and shade to thrive, that brooks flooded in spring because the snow in the mountains melted and added to their waters, and that squirrels hoarded nuts to feed themselves through the winter when food was scarce. It was a magical time for Rilwen. No one had ever given her such complete answers so freely.

When Tathariel returned south, she left a pendant, shaped in the form of a walnut, in Rilwen's keeping. "I have little use for this now. You shall enjoy its properties for the next months while I sojourn in Lórien. When I return to Aradhrynd, you shall give it into my hands again, since I hope one day to require its strengths."

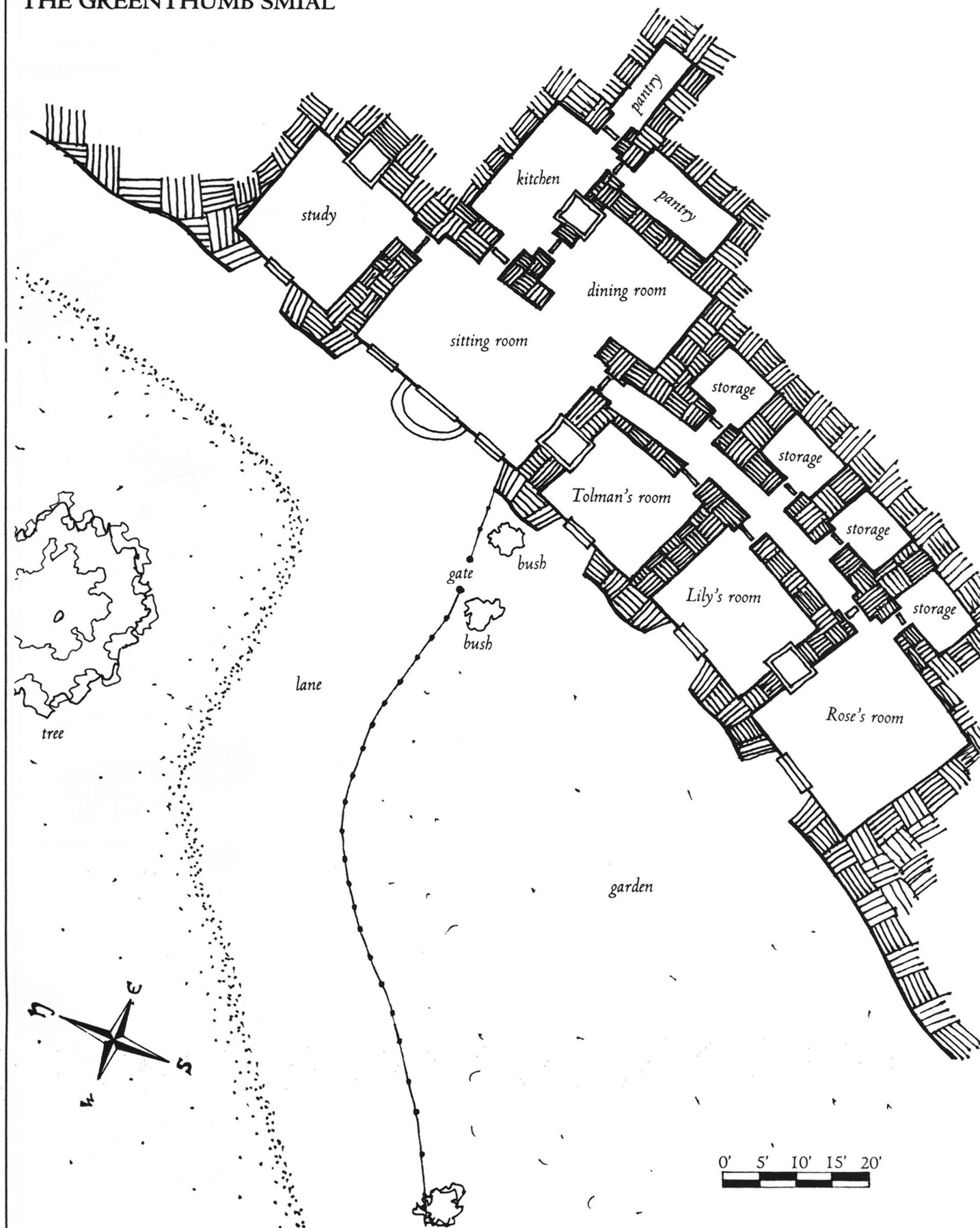
With Tathariel's gift, Rilwen looked at the moon through the eyes of badgers and raccoons, felt the sap rising through the branches of the beech trees in spring-tide, and smelt the scent of wolves and Orcs on the southerly breeze through the nose of a wildcat. She spent all her time in the woodlands, refusing to come home when the sun set and the stars came out. The forest was even more interesting by night than by day.

Her rambles through Mirkwood were abruptly cut short. The forest was becoming more dangerous as the years passed, and Thranduil requested his people to curtail their solitary travel outside his Halls. Patrols of warriors, including Cúforn, Rilwen's father, still went out, and feasting parties headed by the King still gathered in the woodland glades, but Merethiel and Ránian no longer strolled to their cottage hideaway. Nor did they permit Rilwen to leave the Elven-king's Halls.

The constant company of friends and acquaintances bore hardly on these three wanderers. Merethiel grew pale and wan, while Ránian sank into a trance from which she refused to awaken. Even Rilwen lost some of her customary sparkle. Within the week, it was decided to remove from Aradhrynd to Rivendell, west of the Misty Mountains.

Ránian came out of her trance as the travellers passed through the foothills west of the peaks. Yet she was destined to part from her family. She did not break her journey at Rivendell, but rode on to the Grey Havens to take ship for the Undying Lands. She gave her young sister a

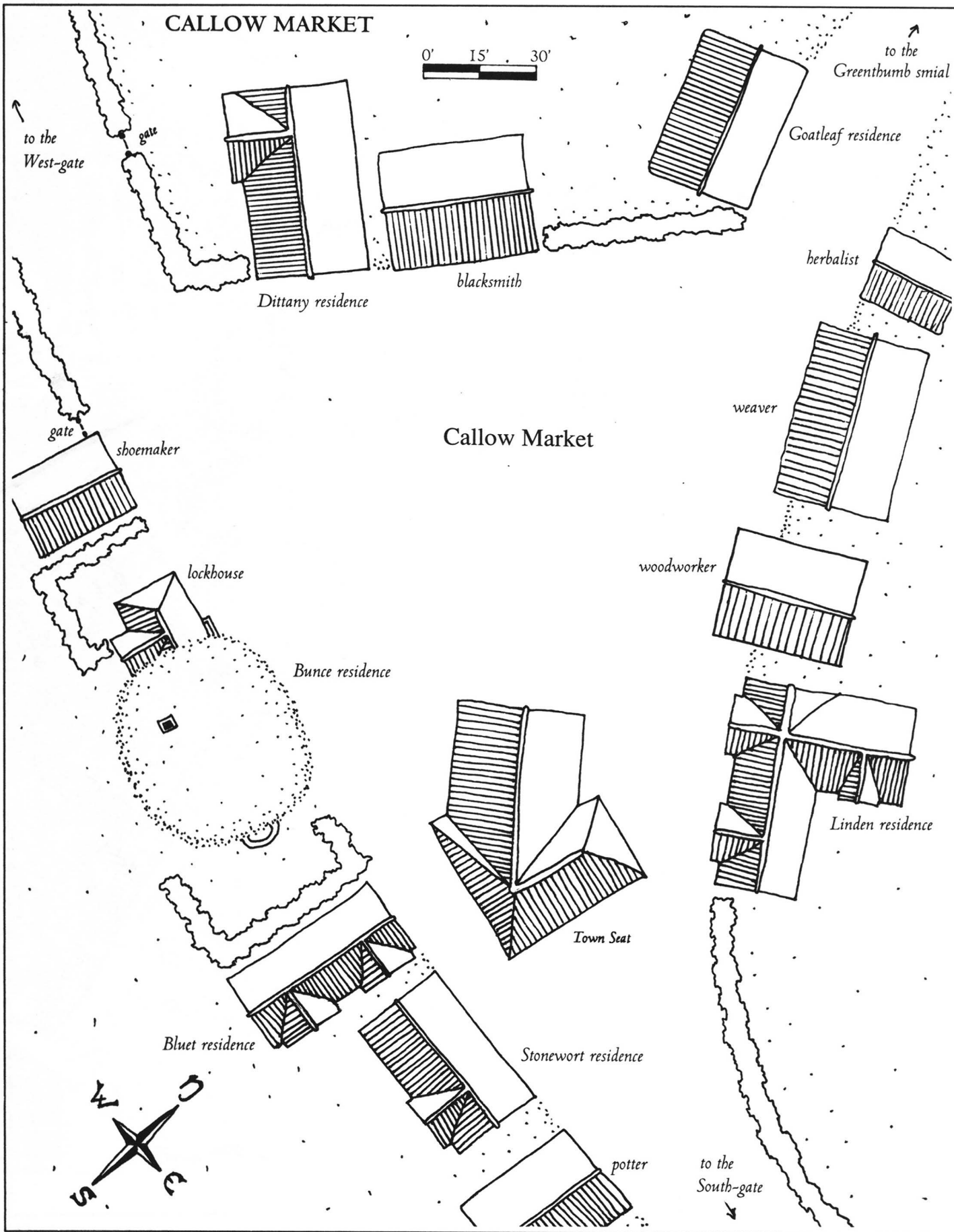
# THE GREENTHUMB SMIAL





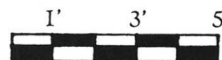
# CALLOW MARKET

0' 15' 30'



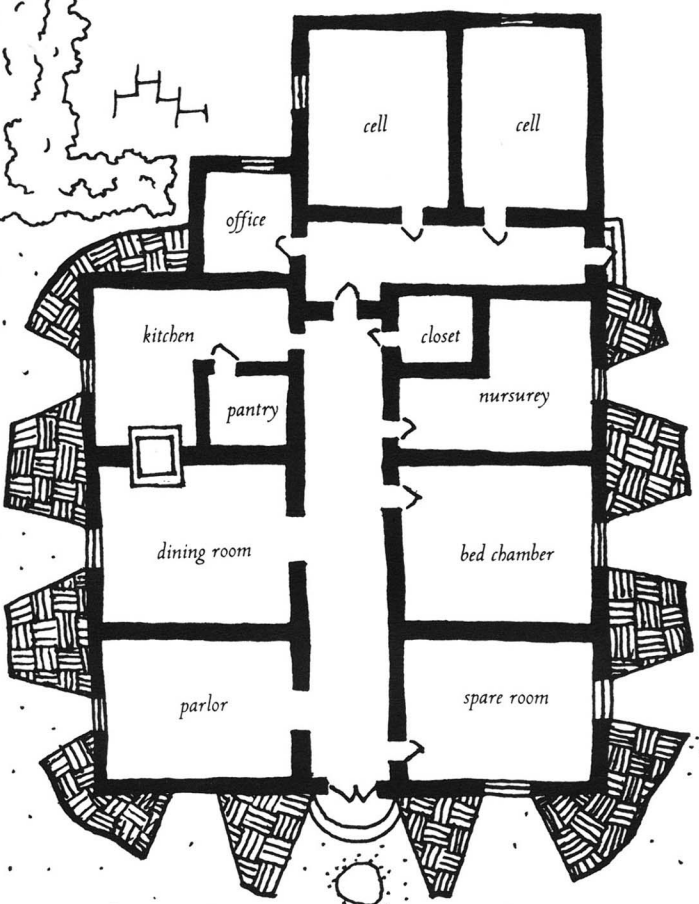
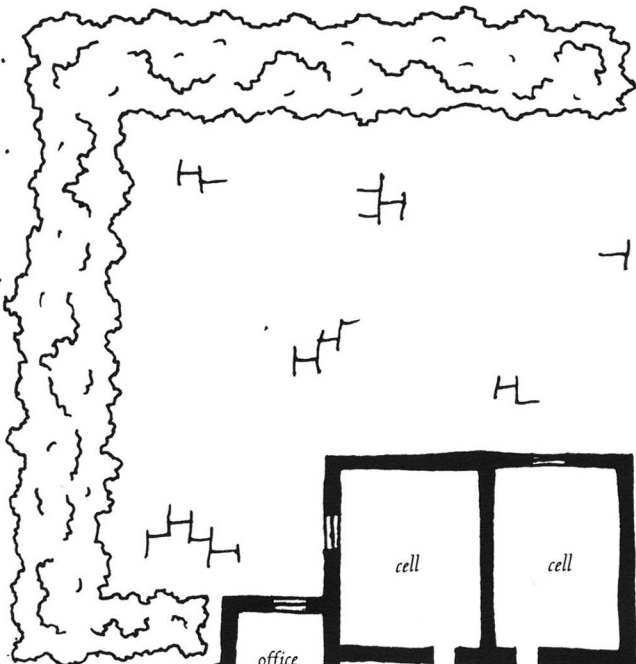
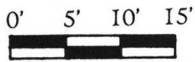
THE  
GREENTHUMB  
SITTING ROOM

The floor plan depicts a sitting room with a fireplace on the left wall. A large rug is placed in the center of the room. A sofa is positioned against the right wall, and several armchairs are arranged around a central coffee table. A side table is located near the fireplace. A compass rose indicates the cardinal directions: North (N), South (S), East (E), and West (W). A scale bar at the top right shows measurements of 1', 3', and 5'.

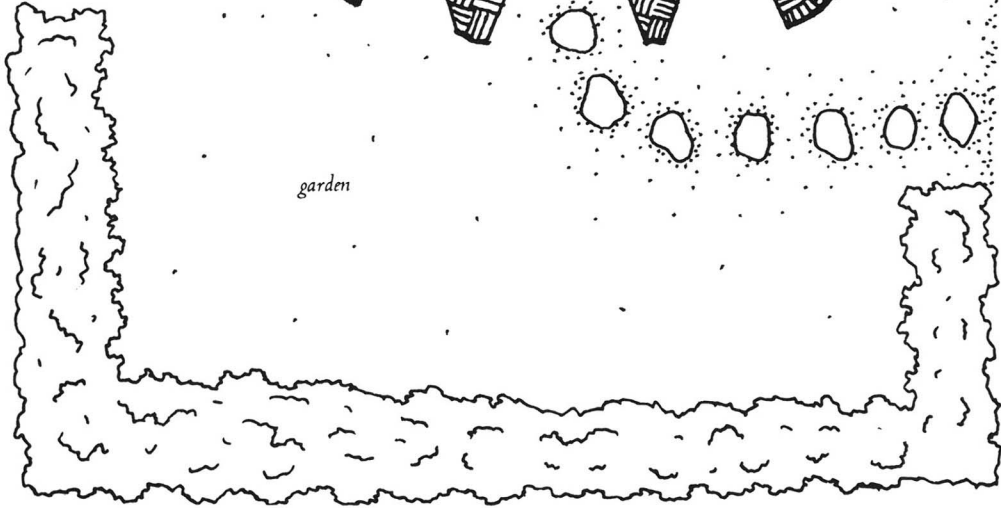




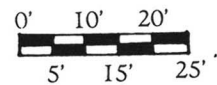
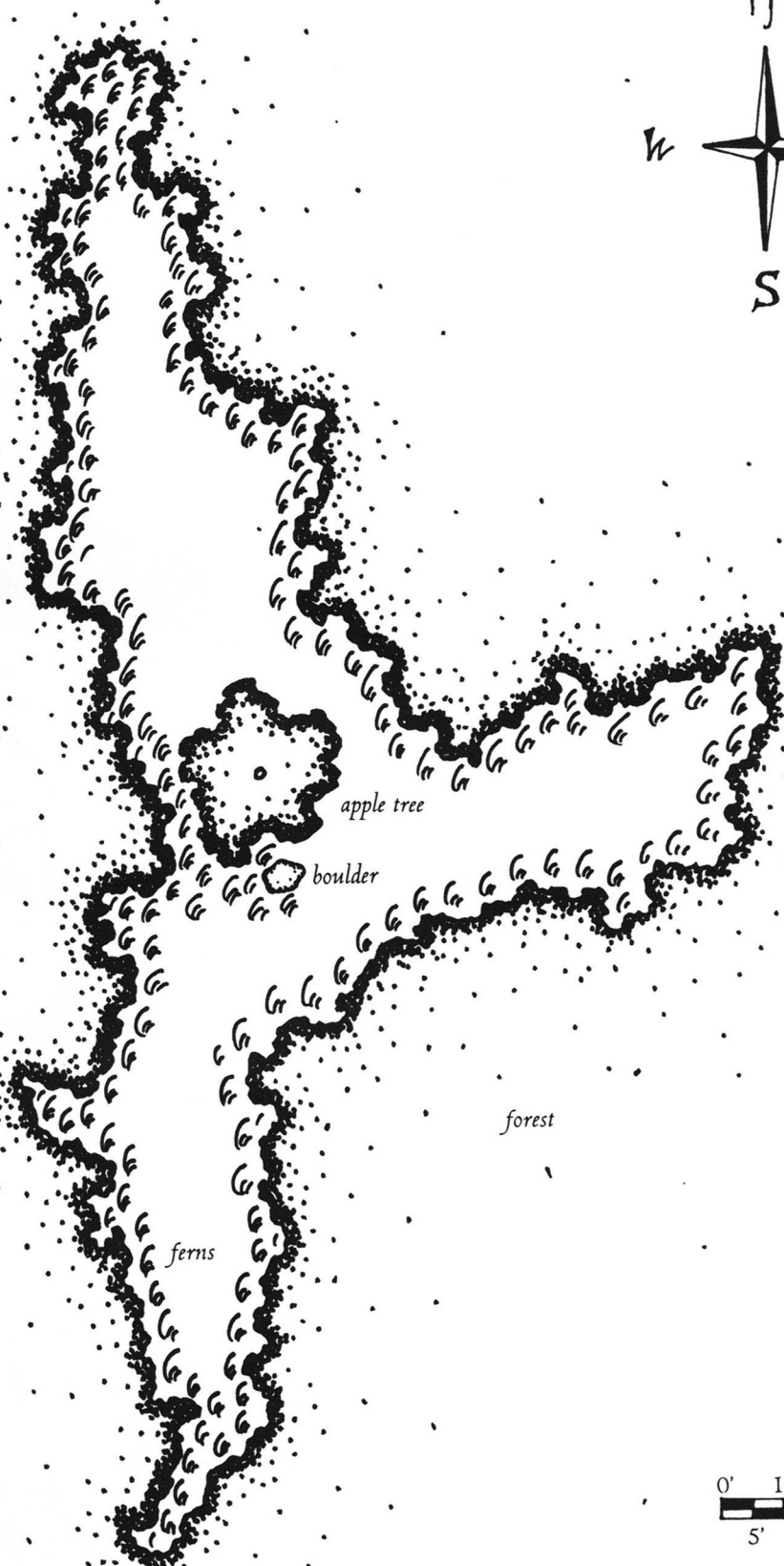
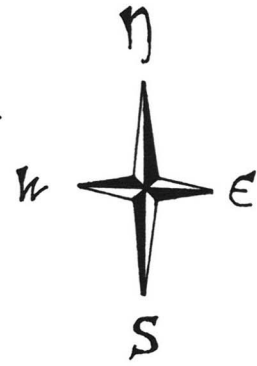
THE LOCKHOUSE



Callow Market

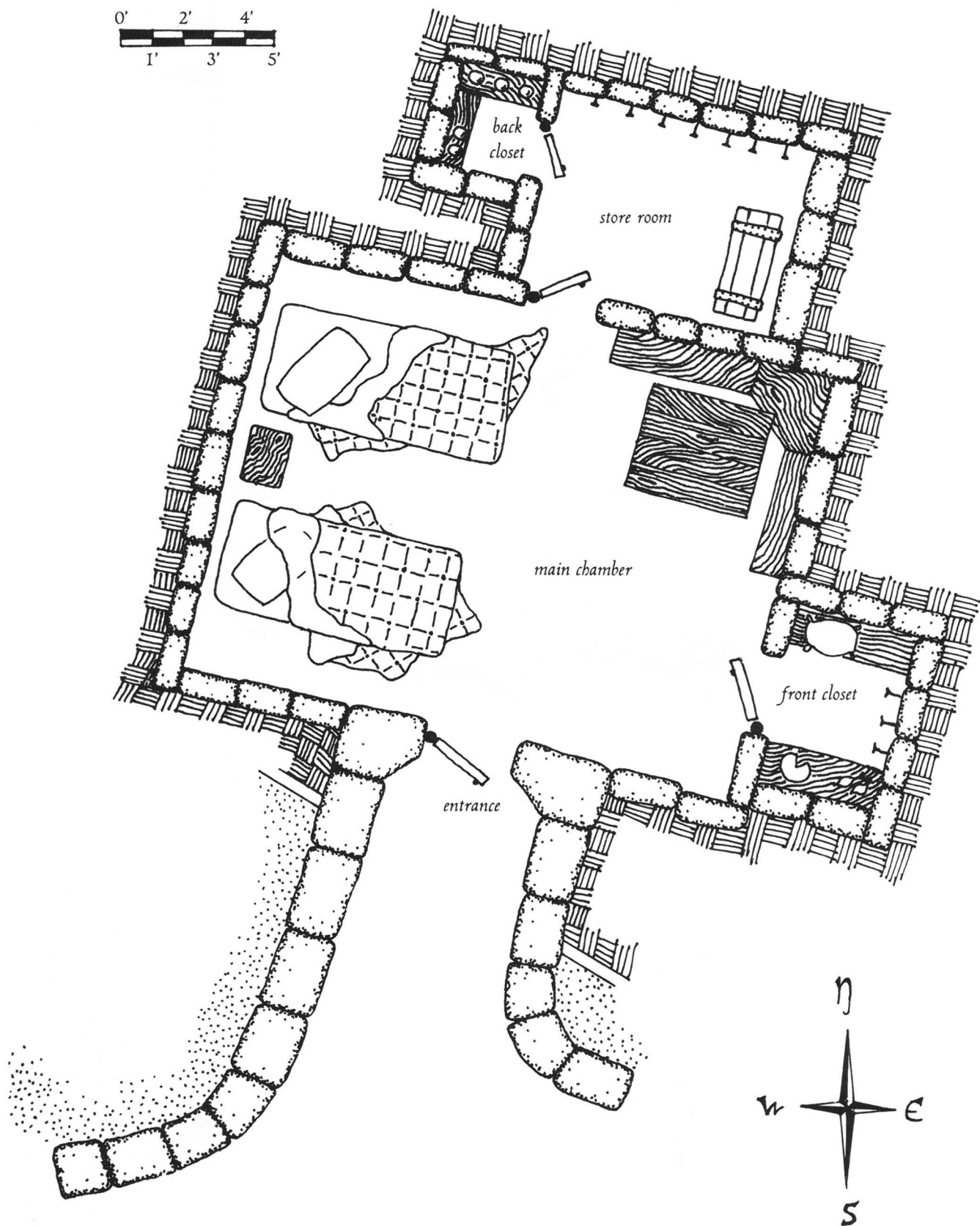
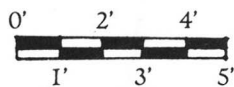


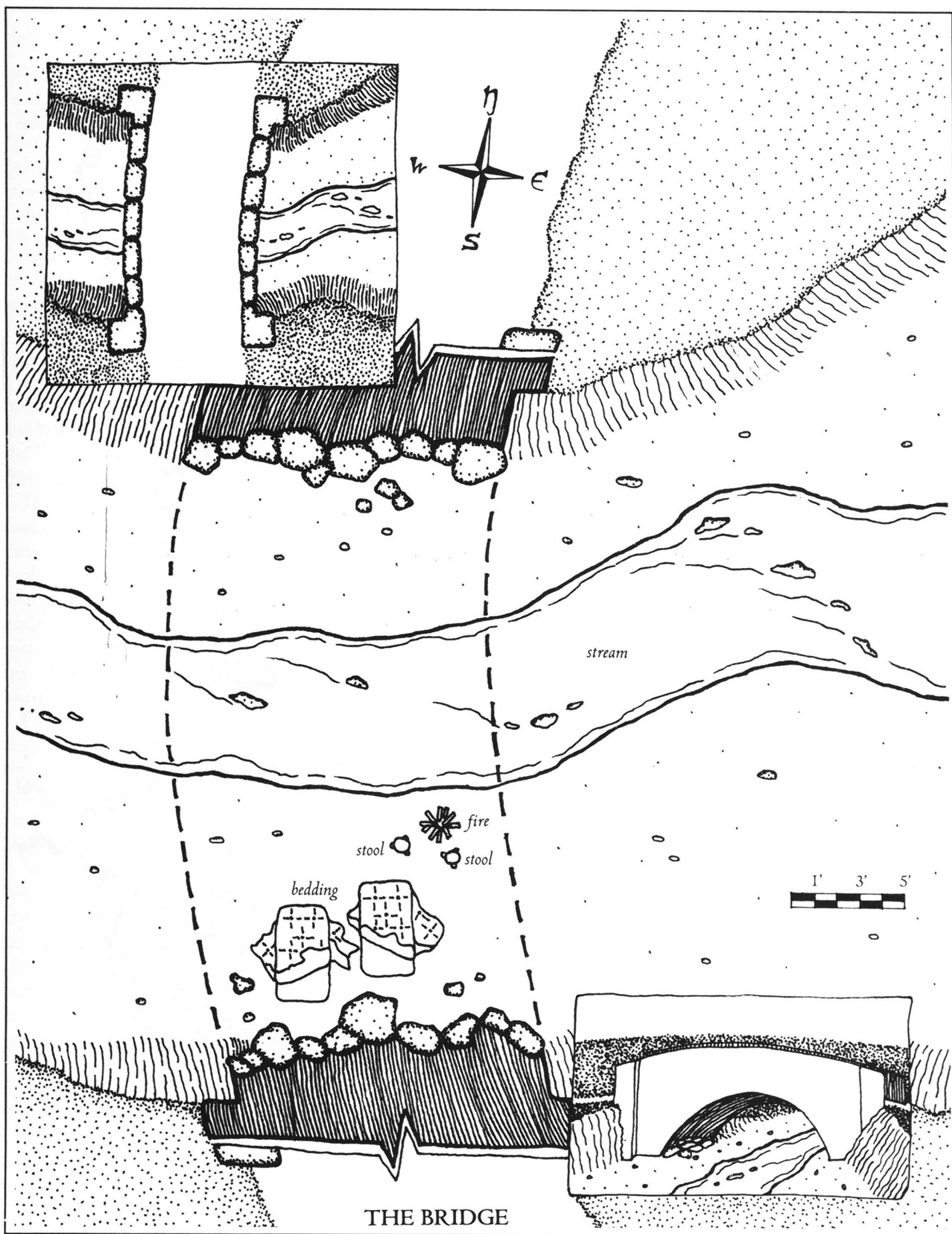
# THE CLEARING



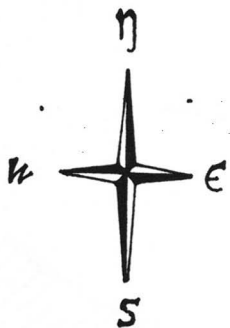


# THE TROLL-HOLE

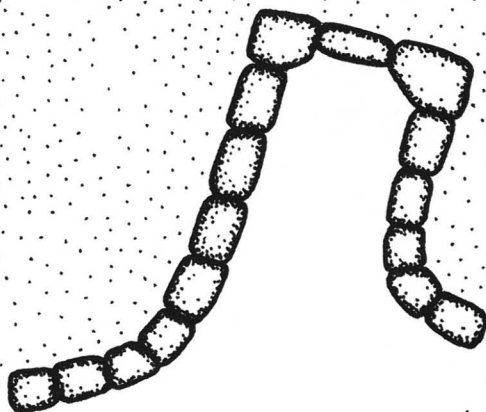




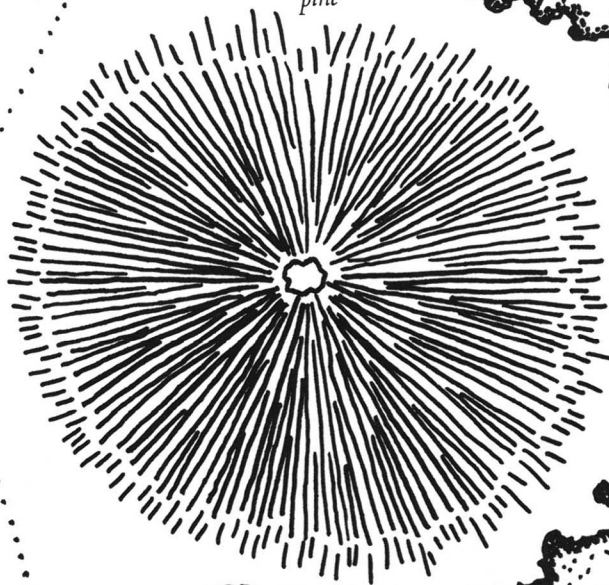
# THE TROLLS' HILL



hilltop



pine



hickory





Name:				CHARACTER RECORD Half-elf Ranger				Damage Taken:		Experience Points:	
BONUSES										Equipment:   Other Gear:   Notes:	
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special	=	Total	STAT			
Strength	NA	+	0	+		=		Strength			
Agility	NA	+	1	+		=		Agility			
Intelligence	NA	+	1	+		=		Intelligence			
Movement	NA	+	1	+		=		Movement			
Defense	NA	+	1	+		=		Defense			
Melee OB		+	-1	+		=		Melee OB			
Missile OB		+	1	+		=		Missile OB			
General		+	1	+		=		General			
Subterfuge		+	0	+		=		Subterfuge			
Perception		+	1	+		=		Perception			
Magical		+	0	+		=		Magical			
Endurance	NA	+	35	+		=		Endurance			

ring, fashioned in the shape of a bluebell, as a keepsake and kissed her parents farewell before setting her face to the West. The tears in Rilwen's eyes entirely dimmed their light in this grievous hour.

The sympathy and solitude present in Rivendell soothed her sadness. And the valley as experienced through Tathariel's pendant was a whole new world to explore. Beavers, blue-headed ducks, river mink, the strange *biam moss* that brought battle frenzy to the Hillmen of Rhudaur, and the blue-white *faghiu* flower with petals that induced love were only the first of the marvels she discovered. Rilwen's glance regained its luster as she prowled happily at will.

Two years passed. Rilwen lost the dimpled curves of the very young and grew straight and slim. Her mother smiled and sighed at the change, and abandoned her final attempts to prevent her independent daughter from rambling alone outside the haven. Paradoxically, the Shining Maid gained a friend soon afterward.

Amidst the ease of the last homely house, Rilwen became aware of a knot of sorrow. It resided in the Elf-child named Gallind. Seven summers had passed since his birth, but he seemed blind and deaf and unaware of all around him. Day after day, he sat unmoving in the nursery chamber set aside for him, his blank eyes gazing on some vision beyond the senses. His mother and father grieved, and their friends grieved with them.

Rilwen directed her steps to Gallind's nursery one morning carrying a strand of silk in her hands. Kneeling opposite him, she braided a skipping rope and hummed. Suddenly, Gallind's eyes focused on her face, and he asked a question: "When you came to this valley, were the stars as bright as you wished them to be?"

Remembering her sister, Ránian, she answered, "No they were dimmer. One day I will travel further West, and the Stars there will rival the Sun and the Moon. Would you like to come with me to see the toadstools in a clearing in the woods?"

Gallind considered gravely. "Will they be red with white speckles?"

"They will," Rilwen replied. "But how did you know it? I though you had refused to look about the valley until now."

"I have seen another landscape, and it was very beautiful." A shadow passed across his face. "Take me to see your woodland glade." Gallind rose to his feet and held out his hand. Rilwen took it in hers, and they departed the house together.

Gallind and Rilwen were not always together, but Merethiel's heart beat easier. Gallind fashioned a reed pipe, and the pair were often accompanied by Lauriel, an Elven lass of fifteen summers who loved dancing. Her voice was warm and golden, like her hair, adding subtle harmonies to the piper's clear, silver-toned music. Rilwen pursued her study of Rivendell's wild life less avidly, spending long days listening to her friends' song and developing a taste for Elvish poetry.

More years passed. Rilwen's travels took her farther and farther afield. One evening she found herself outside the town named Bree, where Humans and Hobbits lived together in harmony. The evening's first star appeared as she sat beneath an apple tree in the outskirts of some woods. The sweet, wholesome smell of its blossoms hung in the air, and a chorus of crickets sang in the grasses. Rilwen sighed with contentment and watched the dusk deepening. Later, when the sky blazed with stars, she discovered that her sister's ring was missing

from her fourth finger. Among the ferns edging the clearing, in the grasses filling its center, amidst the roots beneath the apple tree, she searched. When the moon rose, its cool radiance illuminated tear tracks on her face. The ring was not to be found.

A breeze ruffled the night air. Unheralded, a Hobbit-youth stood before the Elf. His gaze was friendly, and a merry grin turned up his lips. "Tolman Greenthumb, at your service," he introduced himself. "May I help you? You seem to be in some trouble. Perhaps my skill as a Finder might solve your problem."

By the time Tolman discovered Rilwen's ring tangled in the tongue of a very angry toad in Crooked Creek, the Elf and the Hobbit were fast friends. Sharing a flask of *míruvor* as the sun rose, they sat side by side in companionable silence. Rilwen promised to visit Tolman again when next she strayed near Bree.

She kept her promise, and the unconventional friendship grew strong and deep. Tolman brought his sister Lily to the forest clearing, and the three plaited wreaths of bluebells and white violets. Rilwen sang, and Tolman pelted his sister with flowers while she danced. At last, the setting sun brought an end to their revelry.

When Rilwen attained her twenty-third year, she vowed to return her walnut pendant to its rightful owner: Tathariel. As she prepared for the journey east, her friend Gallind prepared for another to the west. His parents were leaving for the Lands Undying. Would he join them? His beloved, Eärwing, had already departed for the West.

Rilwen delayed her own journey to accompany her childhood companion to the Grey Havens. If he sailed on one of the ships that would never return, she wished to bid him farewell. And if he stayed ashore, the return to Rivendell would be shorter with a friend.

Gallind's last words to his parents were tinged with longing, but he was resolute in his decision to remain behind. "Would that I might see the Pélóri by your side and greet my beloved in your sight. Tell Eärwing that I have named her harp for the joy that springs to my heart when her face graces my dreams. Fare well my mother and my father."

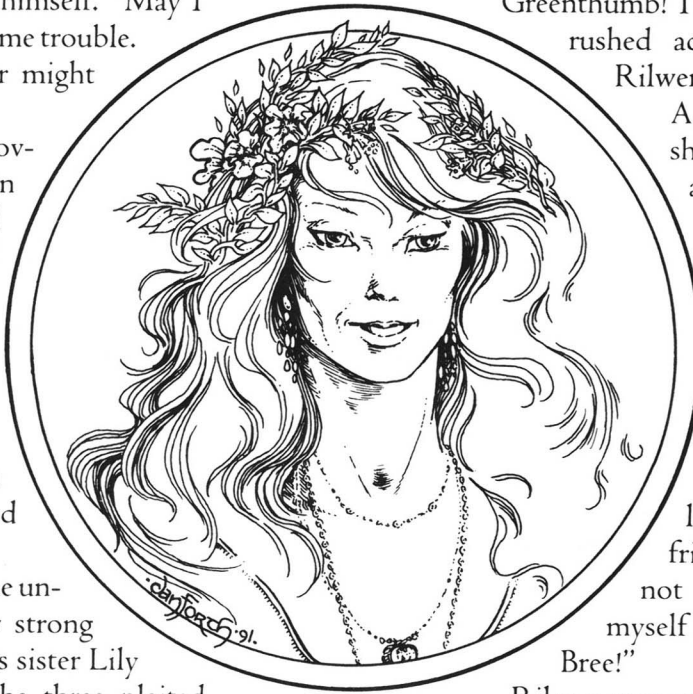
Returning from Mithlond, the two stopped in the woodland glade outside of Bree. Gallind perched on a boulder to strum the strings of his harp. Rilwen reclined on the ferns below and listened to the rippling music. An owl hooted. The night breeze strengthened. Suddenly a diminutive maid, her height just shy of three feet, materialized beneath an oak. Her hair grew in wispy curls, and her wide eyes held an eager shyness. It was Lily Greenthumb! The Hobbit paused briefly, then rushed across the clearing to where Rilwen sat.

A tumbled story — of missing sheep, a Troll, the unfounded accusation of poaching made against Tolman, and the Finder's current imprisonment in the lockhouse — came pouring out. Rilwen shook her head as the agitated Lily began to plead for help. "Elves do not meddle in the affairs of Men or Half-lings or Dwarves, but an Elf-friend desiring his freedom cannot be denied. Both Gallind and myself shall accompany you back to Bree!"

Rilwen rose and turned away to explain the situation to Gallind. "Lily Greenthumb is one of the Pheriannath and one I name an Elf-friend. Her brother is wrongfully imprisoned, prevented from challenging the Torog that threatens their community. She asks my aid, and I find my heart loath to refuse. I shall follow her now and wish you well on your return to Imladris."

As Rilwen stepped forward, Gallind caught her arm. "Wait! My journey home will keep. The Hobbit-maid's face, so creased by worry, awakens pity in my breast. I shall accompany you." The harpist drew a cover round his instrument and slung it over one shoulder.

As the three passed through the woods, Lily described more calmly the advent of the Troll, her brother's determination to confront the monster, and his subsequent imprisonment by Bree's Shirriff. The murmuring sounds of her voice blent softly with the rustle of the tree leaves. The Hobbit's footsteps were nearly as light as those of the Elves. Arriving at Lily's home, they discovered two more friends of the Greenthumbs waiting in the sitting room.



Name:				CHARACTER RECORD Dwarf Warrior				Damage Taken:		Experience Points:	
BONUSES										Equipment:   Other Gear:   Notes:	
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special	=	Total	STAT			
Strength	NA	+	2	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Strength			
Agility	NA	+	-1	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Agility			
Intelligence	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Intelligence			
Movement	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Movement			
Defense	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Defense			
Melee OB	_____	+	2	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Melee OB			
Missile OB	_____	+	0	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Missile OB			
General	_____	+	1	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	General			
Subterfuge	_____	+	1	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Subterfuge			
Perception	_____	+	0	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Perception			
Magical	_____	+	-3	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Magical			
Endurance	NA	+	60	+	_____	=	<input type="text"/>	Endurance			

The young Dwarf began learning the business of merchant trading. It took an eye for detail and a gift for friendly, but shrewd, bargaining with folk of all kindreds and conditions. When his father rebuked him for failing to notice the price on cheese rounds in Rood or for allowing a new customer to pay for the last round of beer at a tavern, Gláin sometimes thought wistfully of the narrower life he had lived in Merlost. Yet, the freedom of the road, the new friendships formed along the way, Grálin's bluff company, and his own slowly emerging skill as a trader lured Gláin onward.

Gláin's first solo commission involved commerce with Elves desiring long knives for Scouts patrolling the Lone Lands. He stopped at *The Prancing Pony* in Bree, and there discovered that he had misplaced the letter of introduction written by his father. The worried Dwarf searched his wagon, his room at the inn, and his personal baggage. The letter was nowhere to be found.

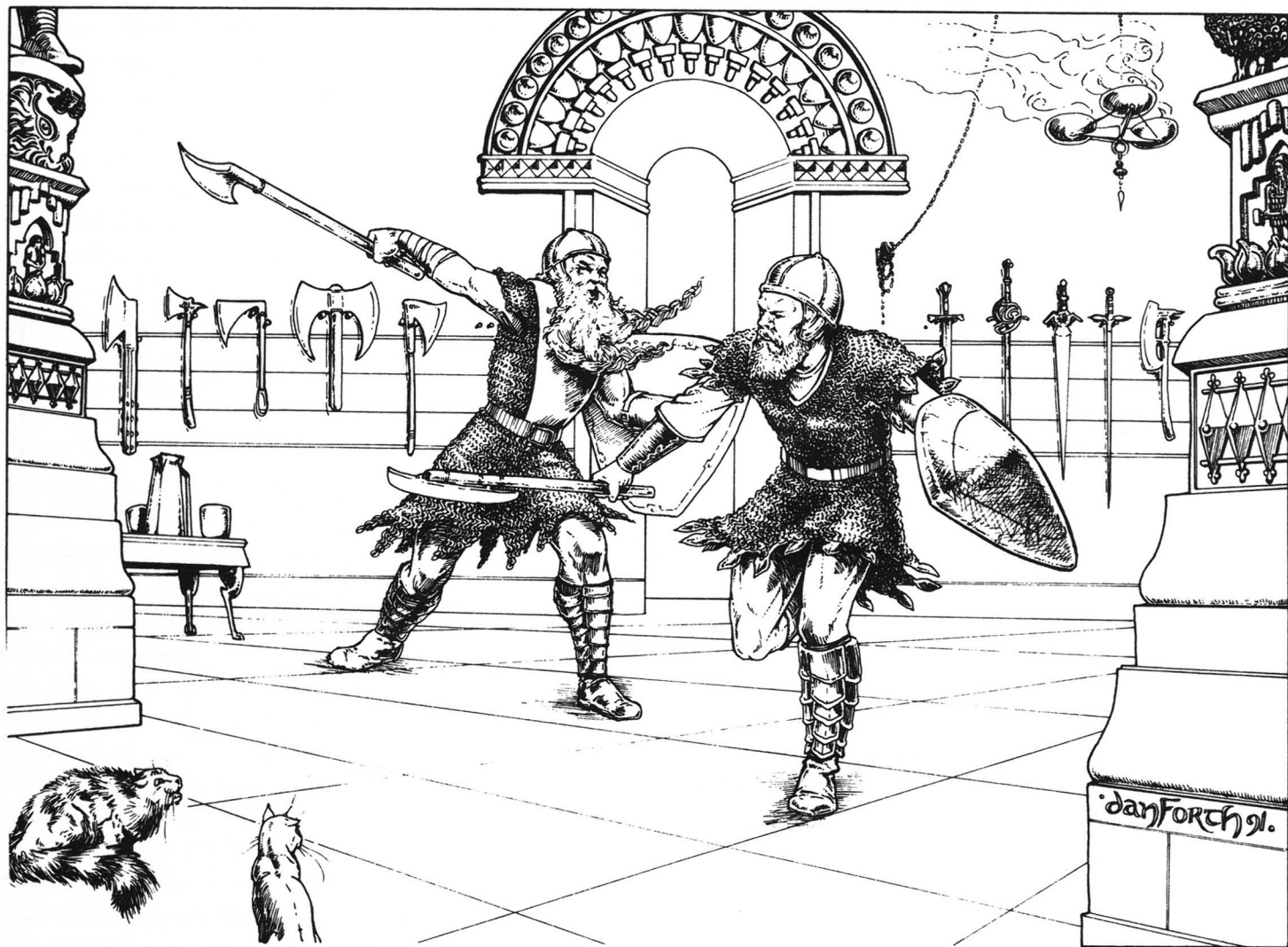
Gláin confided his trouble to the innkeeper Barliman Butterbur, who gave him some worthy advice. "Lost a letter of introduction! Here, at *The Pony*!? That's bad, it is. And here's me, run off my feet, I'm so busy. I'd need six legs to keep up with it all, but I'll see what I can do for you. Nob! I say, Nob, you addle-pated slowpoke! This Gentle-dwarf has lost . . . what was it now? Never mind! Nob, run over and get Tolman Greenthumb. He's a Finder, sir, the best we have in these parts. You turn the problem over to him, and the letter will be back in your hands before you can snap your fingers."

Tolman proved to be a young, bright-eyed Hobbit with a wide grin. Gláin engaged his services on the spot, and within 45 minutes the letter was found inside a folded umbrella stacked with the rolling pins in the kitchen. How it came to be stowed in such a place remains a mystery to this day, but Gláin's business with the Elves in Rivendell prospered. Thereafter, when Gláin passed through Bree, he always stopped to take a noggin of ale with Tolman Greenthumb.

Later that year, at summer's end, Gláin travelled to Castle Noirins. It was one of the few fortresses north of the Shire not in ruins and still inhabited. There he purchased excess building stone, recently quarried for a new barbican (now nearly complete), and carted it to Bree where a wealthy landowner was adding a wing to his already spacious manor. The Dwarf also carried a passenger: Tatharína, a young girl going to live with the aged healer Fanuira. Despite her ready smile and cheerful manner, the lass seemed often on the verge of tears. Gláin fussed over her almost like a mother hen raising a duckling. He made hot chocolate in the mornings before breaking camp, let her take the reins sometimes while on the road, and opened a jar of jelly beans to serve as snacks during the day. She took comfort from the Dwarf's kindness, but did not speak of the cause of her unhappiness.

Once settled in Bree, Tatharína made friends with Lily Greenthumb, Tolman's sister. The three finished their growing up together. As adolescents they pestered Gláin for stories of adventure in the wide outer world surrounding Bree. As young adults they invited him to dinner and pressed him to stay as a house guest rather than using the inn. Gláin chuckled at the change, but enjoyed their hospitality nonetheless.





One summer evening shortly after sundown, Gláin arrived in Bree and stabled his horses at *The Prancing Pony*. He took a mug of mead in the taproom and listened to the talk. The Bree-landers were making quite a hubbub about some missing sheep. The Dwarf began calculating the possible resulting profit to be gained from wool. His thoughts were interrupted by Barliman who bustled by with a tray of biscuits, pushing a folded note into Gláin's hands.

Gláin, my friend,

Greetings. Would that I might bid you join us for a meal, but necessity dictates otherwise. Tolman has been falsely accused of sheep poaching and taken to the lockhouse. Since he has discovered that a Troll is at large in the countryside (and cannot convince our Uncle Holfast to release him), I request your help. Tom hopes we might outwit the Troll before it devours more sheep or, worse, a straying child. Please bring Tatharína to our smial. I have gone to fetch Rilwen and will meet you there in half an hour. In haste,

Lily

The Dwarf cracked his knuckles, and pushed his chair back. Perhaps the hours under Fróin's instruction were going to pay off. The Troll would certainly make a tough opponent. Gláin extracted his armor, shield, and weapons from his wagon (locked in *The Pony's* stable) and went to find Tatharína.

Half an hour later, the Dwarf and the young woman were entering the Greenthumb smial using the key hidden under a stack of clay pots in the garden. Warm lamplight illuminated the sitting room, but Lily had not yet returned from her errand. Gláin and Tatharína settled into worn, comfortable armchairs to await the Hobbit and Rilwen.

Name:		CHARACTER RECORD Human Bard				Damage Taken:		Experience Points:	
BONUSES									
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special	=	Total	STAT	
Strength	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	○	Strength	
Agility	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	○	Agility	
Intelligence	NA	+	2	+	_____	=	○	Intelligence	
Movement	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	○	Movement	
Defense	NA	+	0	+	_____	=	○	Defense	
Melee OB	___	+	0	+	_____	=	○	Melee OB	
Missile OB	___	+	-1	+	_____	=	○	Missile OB	
General	___	+	0	+	_____	=	○	General	
Subterfuge	___	+	-1	+	_____	=	○	Subterfuge	
Perception	___	+	2	+	_____	=	○	Perception	
Magical	___	+	2	+	_____	=	○	Magical	
Endurance	NA	+	35	+	_____	=	○	Endurance	
								Equipment:	
								Other Gear:	
								Spells:	
								Notes:	

in the company of a Dwarf from the Blue Mountains named Gláin. Provided with several trunks full of farewell gifts from the castle folk, a fine fur-lined wool cloak from Lord Haronui, and a small casket carved by Edwin out of fragrant rosewood, she put on a cheerful face for the journey.

Yet the dampness of her pillow, soaked by morning with tears for the death of the only mother she ever knew, betrayed her grief. Gláin made no comment, but did her small kindnesses throughout the long days on the road. Tatharína soon realized that his brusque manner hid a warmhearted nature as comforting as hot chocolate.

Fanuira, the aged healer of the village Bree, listened to the news of Eliana's death calmly, but her shoulders stooped lower and the color went out of her wise, old face for a time. The herbalist of Castle Noirins had been dear to her heart.

Fanuira welcomed Tatharína into her household with genuine warmth, but the girl insisted that she prove her skill before becoming the healer's student. With deft fingers, she repaired the wing of an injured lark rescued from a cat's paws by Fanuira. The bird was well enough to fly the very next day, and Tatharína became Fanuira's apprentice as it took flight over the hospice weather vane.

Fanuira knew more obscure herb lore than any healer within a hundred leagues of Bree. Tatharína had learned from Eliana that Bitter Tansy could be brewed as a tea and swallowed to relieve headache or eye strain. From Fanuira, she learned that the herb might also be powdered and inhaled to clear congestion of the sinuses or made into a salve and applied to frostbitten parts to restore circulation. For every herb with two or three applications, Fanuira knew half a dozen more. Yet this

impressive store of knowledge was not the reason that Eliana had insisted that her foster daughter seek the healer's teaching.

"Knowledge of the healing properties of growing things is but half the art of a healer," stated Fanuira. "There is an Essence that originates in every plant, every beast, every person, and even the earth itself. It is born of the Song which created Arda and all things within Arda. A true seeker may manipulate the Essence to heal injury and illness even more effectively than the administering of herbal remedies. You shall learn to weave the Essence, Tatharína, for the gift to do so lies within you."

Thereafter, the girl spent only a fraction of her time memorizing the appearance, preparations, and uses of the hundreds of herbs available to a healer. Peculiar exercises in concentration, meditation, and visual imagination, all intended to strengthen her mental abilities, occupied the greater part of her days. Tatharína was quite diligent in her studies, forgoing all the more amusing pastimes typical of girlhood.

Fanuira was relieved when the leaves of the golden sorrel crop acquired their characteristic yellow hue, bringing the Hobbit-lass Lily Greenthumb to the hospice with a basket full of the herbs. Tatharína answered the knock on the door and beheld a diminutive maid with deep blue eyes and honey brown hair whose wispy curls were pulled back in a ponytail. She seemed very surprised to see Tatharína on the threshold rather than the aged Fanuira.

"I've come to study under Fanuira and to serve as her helper," the apprentice explained. "My name is Tatharína. And you must be Lily Greenthumb. Fanuira said she expected you either today or tomorrow."

The visitor blushed and seemed so shy that Tatharína felt impelled to make her feel more at ease. At Fanuira's urging, she dropped her plans for an afternoon of study and invited Lily to help feed the fox cubs ensconced in the infirmary. Tatharína warmed further to the Hobbit upon discovering that Lily detested sewing as much as she did, liked kittens (especially tabbies) better than puppies, and thought roaming the countryside in a rainstorm to be a grand experience. The two were fast friends when it was time for the Hobbit to return home.

Thereafter, Tatharína spent some portion of every day with her new friend. They skipped rope, played jacks, and romped in the lane outside the hospice. Occasionally, Lily's twin brother Tolman joined them for a game of marbles or persuaded the two girls to come fishing in Crooked Creek with him. Lily usually brought her sketch pad on these expeditions, devoting herself to drawing while Tatharína and Tom dangled hooked worms on lines in the brook. They caught many a trout for dinner, but Lily brought home pastel and watercolor landscapes that were beginning to catch the eyes of the few collectors of art in Bree. Tatharína became one of the artist's favorite models due to her unusual copper-colored hair. She sat for long hours while Lily attempted to capture the nuances of dawn light, starlight, or moonlight on the long, curling locks. Many girlish secrets were exchanged during these sessions, and their affection for one another deepened.

Several winters later, Lily's mother developed a recurring cough. Her health deteriorated as the days grew darker. Tatharína ceased performing altogether the exercises that would enable her to weave the Essence. Instead, she labored in the stillroom, creating obscure vapors which, when inhaled, eased the pain of Rose Greenthumb's aching lungs. Often, she remained all night by the Hobbit's bedside.

When Rose died in the Spring, her children withdrew from the company of their friends for a season. Tatharína respected the siblings' need for an interlude of grieving and reflection, but she missed the Hobbits' glad chatter, carefree laughter, and unexpected insights. She returned to her studies, and her long days over the books often extended into equally long nights of the same. As autumn approached, Tatharína felt keenly the thrumming of the Essence as it flowed through her being. With a hint of red showing in the maple leaves, the young woman cast her first spell.

Autumn also witnessed the return of the Greenthumbs to the society of their friends. A deep serenity underlying their conversation, the fruit of solitude, made their

company more satisfying than ever before. They invited Tatharína to dinner at their table often.

Alaric, a young Riverman who accompanied his father up and down the Brandywine, was another friend included in the merry gatherings around the Greenthumbs' hearth. Tolman travelled extensively due to his reputation as a Finder — someone who locates missing objects (or people) — and made new friends wherever he went. Gláin, the Dwarf whose trading caravan had brought Tatharína to Bree, was among the Hobbit's wide acquaintanceship. Gláin's visit to the Greenthumb smial allowed Tatharína to rediscover his bluff manner and kindly heart.

One summer evening, several years later, Tatharína found good cause to appreciate Gláin's good nature. She had heard news that day of the loss of several sheep from Fanuira, who talked with Odo Underbarrow the morning after a ewe and two lambs disappeared from his flock. A wildcat in the Chetwood or poachers seemed the most likely explanation. Tatharína reviewed in her mind the remedies for animal bites while she moved from casement to casement, closing the windows of the hospice for the night. An impatient knocking at the front door below interrupted her thoughts.

Gláin burst into speech when Tatharína opened the door. "Tolman needs our help, Tatharína. Read the note that his sister left for me at *The Prancing Pony*." The Dwarf thrust a crumpled sheet of paper into her hands.

*Gláin, my friend,*

*Greetings. Would that I might bid you join us for a meal, but necessity dictates otherwise. Tolman has been falsely accused of sheep poaching and taken to the lockhouse. Since he has discovered that a Troll is at large in the countryside (and cannot convince our Uncle Holfast to release him), I request your help. Tom hopes we might outwit the Troll before it devours more sheep or, worse, a straying child. Please bring Tatharína to our smial. I have gone to fetch Rilwen and will meet you there in half an hour. In haste,*

*Lily*

A few minutes sufficed for gathering the simples that might prove useful to a group intent on confronting Trolls. With a quick farewell to Fanuira, Tatharína slipped into the starlit lane outside. The pair stole quietly through the village, entering the Greenthumb smial with the key hidden under a stack of clay pots in the garden. Warm lamplight illuminated the sitting room, but Lily had not yet returned from her errand. Her friends settled into worn, comfortable armchairs to await the Hobbit and Rilwen.



Name:		CHARACTER RECORD Elf Bard				Damage Taken:	Experience Points:			
BONUSES						Equipment:  Other Gear:  Spells:  Notes:				
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special			=	Total	STAT
Strength	NA	+	-1	+				=		Strength
Agility	NA	+	1	+				=		Agility
Intelligence	NA	+	2	+				=		Intelligence
Movement	NA	+	1	+				=		Movement
Defense	NA	+	1	+				=		Defense
Melee OB		+	-1	+				=		Melee OB
Missile OB		+	0	+				=		Missile OB
General		+	0	+				=		General
Subterfuge		+	-1	+				=		Subterfuge
Perception		+	1	+				=		Perception
Magical		+	2	+				=		Magical
Endurance	NA	+	30	+		=		Endurance		

answer him that day, and her music was a dirge. The next morning she spoke: "The musician is the music. Your melodies will sound differently than mine, but I will show you how to play the songs of your heart before I depart Imladris." Her skin was yet pale, but her eyes were dry.

All that winter she taught him to awaken song from the harp. He was talented, and his melodies captured a fire and a vigor that resembled, but did not mirror, the lively sweetness he had heard in Eärwing's playing at the beginning of their acquaintance. In the spring she bade him farewell and gave him her harp. "Her name was Wave-song. Yet she must be called Thorn, if she travels West with me, a bitter change for her strings to bear. Better she stays with you; let her new name be Vánien (S. "Immortal Sadness"). My blessing on your music, Gallind, and fare thee well."

For three days Gallind played alone in the tower chamber. His fingers were clever, and their cunning filled the room with resounding splendor. The harpist was well pleased, grateful his teacher had stayed sufficiently long to hone his skills.

In the evening that followed the third morning, Gallind visited the tower for the first time as the sun set. It seemed strangely empty. Where was the sea-maid who had dwelt here amidst sorrow and song? He had loved her music well. Yet the music was the musician, and the musician was gone! Gallind ran from the room, calling for his cloak and a horse. He galloped over most of the long leagues between Rivendell and the Grey Havens, but the speed of his mount could not make up for his previous slowness of heart. When he arrived in Mithlond, Eärwing's ship had already departed.

Almost did Gallind throw himself into the waves of the Nen Lhûn. Their blue-green hue reminded him of Eärwing's raiment, and drowning in the sea's cold embrace seemed worth the chance that the water might carry him to her vessel. As he placed the harp Vánien on the short turf at the cliff's edge, Gallind paused. If only Eärwing knew her love to be requited by his, he might rest content. The Bard seated himself on his cloak and drew the harp on to his lap. Its strings murmured under his fingers, and his voice swelled into song.

*An Elven-maid there is this day,  
She holds my heart unknowing.  
Her hair is dusk, the sea her heart,  
And loss her song's dismay.*

As Gallind lapsed into silence, a faint melody from across the waves answered his singing.

*An Elven-maid there is this day,  
She holds thy heart full knowing:  
Although the sea two lovers part,  
Great love doth joy convey.*

Gallind lingered by the shore for a full year, singing to Eärwing and listening for her replies as they drifted toward land. When only the sighing of the sea could be heard, he returned to Rivendell. Yet he renamed Eärwing's harp Vánalassë (Q. "Everlasting Joy").

Rilwen and Lauriel found their friend to be gentler and more inclined to bend to their wishes than before, although he spoke not at all of his time by the Nen Lhûn. His tunes on the wooden flute held a wistful note. The dreamy mood left his face only when he played the harp, creating odd harmonies with passionate concentration.

Soon after Gallind felt the strange tingling of the spirit that marks a Bard's manipulation of the Essence, he cast his first spell. Turlómath refused to show the pleasure he felt in his pupil's accomplishment, saying, "Curb your enthusiasm; such a beginning bodes well, but you still have much to learn."

The teacher's warning was unnecessary. Gallind rarely displayed overmuch excitement for anything, and at this time his thoughts were occupied with graver matters. Airalin, his father, had recently recounted a story of his youth that provoked misgivings in his son's breast.

Long ago, in a woodland north of Lórien and west of Dol Guldur, there dwelt in solitude an Elf named Tathariel (S. "Willow-maid"). She valued the company of trees more than that of her kin, and her solitude more than any treasure. Airalin fled through Tathariel's grove while carrying a message from Thranduil in Mirkwood to Galadriel of Lothlórien. Three dozen Orcs pursued the messenger. With Tathariel's help, Airalin brought death to all of the band, at the cost of the beeches, rowans, and hemlocks of the wood. Raging fire claimed all but a ring of willows surrounding a bubbling spring.

Tathariel came with Airalin to Lórien. He sent to Rivendell for the heirloom of his house, a magical circlet. The Rhîvaran (S. "Crown of Refuge") would protect the displaced Elf's woodland from the depredations of the Necromancer's minions once new saplings were planted.

Although the crown left the last lonely house in a stone casket carried by Elven warriors, it never arrived in Lórien. The gold circlet, resembling a wreath twisted from a hickory branch, had been lost. Nor could any trace of its guardians be found. Airalin took an oath to return with the Rhîvaran one day. He made many unsuccessful journeys to retrieve the item, searching dangerous sites almost at random. Eventually, he sent word of his failure to Tathariel. She forgave him his oath, claiming to be content to dwell in Lórien. There the tale paused for many years.

Gallind's mother ended the long hiatus. Her spirit grew weary of the flowers of Endor, longing for the brighter blossoms that scent the air of the West. She decided to cross the sea with the next ship that left the Grey Havens, and to go whether Airalin accompanied her or not. He wished to travel with Lothiel, but did not regard himself as absolved from his promise to provide Tathariel with a secluded woodland home.

Thinking of his own separation from Eärwing, Gallind urged his father to make the voyage West. Airalin remained unconvinced: "My word might go unbroken, but my honor must be less were I to forsake the Willow-maid." At last, the very morning in which Lothiel mounted the palfrey that would carry her to Mithlond, Gallind pledged himself to the quest for the Rhîvaran, its subsequent delivery to Tathariel, and the replanting of her grove.

Rilwen and Gallind accompanied Lothiel and Airalin to the Grey Havens. A tinge of longing colored Gallind's last words to his parents: "Would that I might see the Pélóri by your side and greet my beloved in your sight. Tell Eärwing that I have named her harp for the joy that springs to my heart when her face graces my dreams. Fare well, my mother and my father."

Returning from Mithlond, the two friends stopped for refreshment in a glade frequented by Rilwen. Gallind perched on a lichen-crusting boulder to strum Vánalassë's strings. The trees whispered in the breeze. Dappled shadows shifted at the clearing's edge. Suddenly a diminutive maid, her height just shy of three feet, materialized under an oak. Her hair grew in wispy curls, and the eager shyness in her wide blue eyes precluded any alarm at her unexpected arrival. Gallind continued playing, his serenity unbroken and a smile behind his dreamy gaze. The Hobbit-lass rushed into tumbled speech with Rilwen.

A short time later, Rilwen moved to the harpist's side, and his fingers ceased their strumming.

"Lily Greenthumb is one of the Pheriannath and one I name an Elf-friend. Her brother has been wrongfully imprisoned, prevented from challenging the Torog (Troll) that threatens their community. She asks my aid, and I find my heart loath to refuse. I shall follow her now and wish you well on your return to Imladris."

As Rilwen stepped away, Gallind caught her arm. "Wait! My journey home will keep. The Hobbit-maid's face, so creased by worry, awakens pity in my breast. I shall accompany you." The harpist drew a cover round his instrument and slung it over one shoulder.

As they passed through the woods, Lily described once more the advent of the Troll, her brother's determination to confront the monster, and his subsequent imprisonment by Bree's Shirriff. Save for the soft sounds of her voice, the group passed quietly. The Hobbit's footsteps were as light as those of the Elves. Arriving at Lily's home, they discovered two more friends of the Greenthumbs waiting in the sitting room.

Name:				CHARACTER RECORD Hobbit Scout				Damage Taken:		Experience Points:		
BONUSES								<div>Equipment:</div> <div>Other Gear:</div> <div>Notes:</div>				
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special	=	Total					STAT
Strength	NA	+	-2	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Strength
Agility	NA	+	3	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Agility
Intelligence	NA	+	0	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Intelligence
Movement	NA	+	-2	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Movement
Defense	NA	+	3	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Defense
Melee OB		+	-2	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Melee OB
Missile OB		+	2	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Missile OB
General		+	0	+		=	<input type="text"/>					General
Subterfuge		+	2	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Subterfuge
Perception		+	1	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Perception
Magical		+	-3	+		=	<input type="text"/>					Magical
Endurance	NA	+	45	+		=	<input type="text"/>	Endurance				

Then Tolman discovered that he possessed an uncanny ability to find items that were lost or misplaced, and the siblings spent less time together. Both were older, beginning to find niches for themselves in Bree's economic structure. Tolman pursued the career of a Finder — a person who locates missing objects (or people) in return for a fee. Lily spent long mornings in front of her easel, attempting to capture the essence of an apple tree as the light on its leaves changed from the first pale rays of dawn through the long-shadowed illumination of early morning to the flat, prosaic sunshine of high noon. She never satisfied herself, but those who bought her paintings were delighted.

Tatharína became one of Lily's favorite models and sat for long hours while the artist painted her unusual copper-colored tresses. Many girlish secrets were exchanged during these sessions, and their friendship acquired a new depth.

When Rose Greenthumb's health began to fail the next winter, Tatharína did many of the small tasks that kept the ill Hobbit-woman comfortable, bathing her aching limbs, changing her rumpled bed clothes, and sitting with her through the long, pain-filled nights. Lily clung to her friend, grateful for her kindness, but refused to let Tatharína do all the nursing. A fine inner strength grew more evident in the Hobbit-lass during this dark time. At her mother's death, Lily sought solitude for her tears rather than the comfort that might have eased her grief too soon.

The intimacy that had characterized their childhood years flourished anew between Lily and Tolman. In their shared sorrow, brother and sister eschewed the company of friends for the summer. Exchanging memories of their mother, pondering the nature of life and death, and slowly learning to laugh again, they healed together. When it was time to expand their lives again in the fall, Tolman asked Wesley Privet (the junior Shirriff) to dine with them one evening, while Lily invited Tatharína. The foursome enjoyed a cozy interlude, roasting nuts and telling jokes by the fireside for hours after the meal was finished. As the year grew colder, the Hobbits' parlor held many more such gatherings. Tatharína came to like Tolman as well as she did Lily.

Occasionally, some of Tolman's friends from farther afield would increase the numbers at the Greenthumbs' board. Alaric, a young Riverman who plied the Brandywine River with his father, obtained leave to visit for several days. Gláin, a Dwarf from the Blue Mountains, passed through Bree three or four times every year. This winter, he put up at Tolman and Lily's, rather than at *The Prancing Pony*.

With the coming of spring, the Hobbits took long walks over the southeast downs and among the trees of the Chetwood. Weeping cherries were putting forth their purplish sprays and the wild pear trees were in flower. Tolman discovered Rilwen, an Elf-maid for whom he had recovered a lost ring years ago, in a forest glade. He made her known to his sister, and the trio shared a flask of Elven *miruvor* while plaiting wreaths of bluebells and white violets. Lily found herself dancing while Rilwen sang and Tolman pelted her with blossoms. Life had regained all its wonder and joy.



On a summer evening, several years later, Tolman returned from *The Prancing Pony*, his head buzzing with gossip. Odo Underbarrow, a poor farmer with a large family, had lost three sheep from his flock. He was not the only victim. Polo Hammidge, who had purchased enough of Lily's watercolors to fill an entire gallery in his spacious smial, also had a ewe and three lambs missing from his livestock. Tolman had offered his skills as a Finder, and was starting his search that very night.

Lily sighed, wishing her brother would wait until morning, but she said nothing. Very likely, he would find nothing tonight, merely enjoying a solitary starlight stroll. She knotted some biscuits and cheese in a kerchief and placed it beside Tolman's walking stick. Smiling ruefully, she picked up her sketchpad as he let himself out the door.

Several hours passed. Absorbed in rendering in charcoal an ash blanket chest with two rag dolls sprawling on its surface, Lily never heard the clock chiming. A cricket's sudden chirp made her look at the mantle. Both hands of the timepiece were pointing at the ten. Where was Tolman? Lily could no longer concentrate on her drawing. Twenty minutes later, a knock on the door sounded. Milo Bunce, her young cousin (he was a mite of merely 8 years), stood on the stoop, hopping up and down at intervals.

"I've got a message for you, Cousin Lily." He grinned. "It's from Cousin Tolman, and he's okay!" Milo dashed away before Lily could say a word. She unfolded the slip of paper between her fingers.

*Lily, dearest,*

*I'm quite fine, but there seems to be the most execrable misunderstanding here. Nat Groathusk and Gil Mossgrave have accused me of poaching sheep, and our Uncle Hol insists on keeping me in the lockhouse for a few days, until the utter ridiculousness of the accusation is clear.*

*But, Lily, I can't afford to wait that long. I **did** find the cause of the missing sheep. There's a Troll at large! You must contact our friends — Gláin, Rilwen, and Tatharína — and have them get me out of here. Perhaps a sneaky approach at my window in the wee hours would work. Tell Gláin to bring a screwdriver to remove the bars. I remain your affectionate brother,*

*Tolman*

Lily started to laugh. "If that isn't Tom all over!" she exclaimed. "What good fortune that Gláin is *indeed* in town! I only hope Rilwen happens to be in the woods tonight as well!"

Sitting down at her writing desk, the Hobbit dashed off a note (see Gláin's foldout for a copy of this note) which she left at *The Prancing Pony* on her way to a certain wild apple tree in the Chetwood. She worried a little that the Troll might find *her* before she found Rilwen. Yet the creature hadn't bothered Tom, and *he* had been looking for it! A cow lowed, and she jumped. What if Tolman was wrong and Rilwen was nowhere nearby? Thank goodness the moon was nearly full and few clouds obscured its light. If the night were darker, she really mightn't have had the courage to look for the Half-elf.

At last, the apple tree came into sight. Lily halted in surprise. A young man with silvery blond, shoulder-length hair and dreamy eyes, perched on the lone boulder in the clearing. Rippling notes from his harp cascaded through the air like water in a brook. Tears came to the Hobbit's eyes, for the song was a sad one. Then Lily saw Rilwen seated among the ferns that surrounded the harpist's rock. She rushed forward with a gasp of relief.

The entire story poured out: the missing sheep, the Troll, the underhanded accusation of poaching, and Tolman's plight in the lockhouse. Rilwen remained unperturbed. With smiling eyes, she declared, "Elves do not meddle in the affairs of Men or Halflings or Dwarves, but an Elf-friend desiring his freedom cannot be denied. Both Gallind and myself shall accompany you back to Bree!"

The Half-elf rose to her feet and moved away to speak with her friend. The murmuring melody of their voices soothed Lily's ears. Her eyelids drooped, and she leaned against the trunk of the apple tree. Perhaps she would soon be back in her Hobbit-hole with the quilts on her small bed pulled up around her chin.

An owl hooted, and the Hobbit rubbed the sleep from her face with an impatient hand. A Troll had yet to be overcome sometime before sunrise, and bedtime was surely many hours away!

Gallind covered his harp and slung it over one shoulder, while Rilwen adjusted her pack. The Half-elf nodded, and Lily started back toward Bree. The night was friendlier with two companions. Their steps were almost as light as her own soft footfalls, but a glimmering, half-unseen radiance touched a tree branch here, a wild flower there as they walked. A deer crossing before them seemed not to notice the Elves' presence. Nor did old Andman Poggin, peering out the window of his modest smial. When the three arrived at Lily's home, they found Tatharína and Gláin awaiting them in the sitting room.

Name:				CHARACTER RECORD Hobbit Scout				Damage Taken:		Experience Points:		
BONUSES								Equipment:   Other Gear:   Notes:				
STAT	Skill	+	Stat	+	Special	=	Total					STAT
Strength	NA	+	-2	+		=	○					Strength
Agility	NA	+	3	+		=	○					Agility
Intelligence	NA	+	0	+		=	○					Intelligence
Movement	NA	+	-2	+		=	○					Movement
Defense	NA	+	3	+		=	○					Defense
Melee OB	—	+	-2	+		=	○					Melee OB
Missile OB	—	+	2	+		=	○					Missile OB
General	—	+	0	+		=	○					General
Subterfuge	—	+	2	+		=	○					Subterfuge
Perception	—	+	1	+		=	○					Perception
Magical	—	+	-3	+		=	○					Magical
Endurance	NA	+	45	+		=	○					Endurance

Tolman and Lily continued to keep house together. Lily baked pastries for Barliman Butterbur, the innkeeper of *The Prancing Pony*, and tended her mother's herb garden. Tolman added a talent for fixing broken toys and tools to his well-established skills as a Finder. Although lacking wealth, the pair were very comfortable. As they grew accustomed to their mother's absence, the joys of fireside and friends regained their appeal. Life held savor again.

One summer evening, several years later, Tolman came home from *The Prancing Pony* with an earful of gossip. Polo Hammidge, the wealthiest Hobbit in Bree, had lost four sheep, and Odo Underbarrow, the poorest farmer in the area, also was missing three. This was clearly a situation begging for a Finder's skills. Tolman had offered his services and planned to start searching that very night. Lily's eyes grew large when her brother told her of his intentions, but she said nothing, merely wrapping some biscuits and a rind of cheese in a bundle and placing it next to Tolman's walking stick by the door.

The Hobbit drew a deep breath as he set out for the fields from which the sheep had disappeared. The air was still, but crisp and clear, and the stars twinkled merrily against the dark, velvety sky. A babble of excited voices seeped from *The Prancing Pony*, down the lane, and a cricket chirped in Lily's garden. It was a grand night for walking. Tolman followed the road to the West-gate, passed through this formidable structure, and turned north onto the Greenway. The eaves of the Chetwood

loomed darkly to Tolman's right, but fields of corn, wheat, and grazing grasses spread outward to the west. Flocks of sheep huddled together, watched by a lone shepherd and his dog. Tolman called a greeting to Halson Hammidge, the eldest of Polo's sons.

The fields farther north were empty of livestock. If they remained untenanted for long, the pastures nearer town would suffer from overgrazing. Sooner or later, the farmers would be forced to expose their flocks to the perils of the outlying fields. Tolman paused in the shadow of a hedgerow. The moon was rising, its creamy roundness slipping upward from the horizon like a china platter being lifted from cloudy dishwater. The dim blues and greys of the night time scene acquired white and silver highlights.

The Hobbit stiffened. An ominous silhouette prowled along the periphery of the closest meadow. In a few more moments, it would emerge from the shadow of the stone wall into the cool rays of the moon. Tolman held his breath. Was it a wildcat, strayed from the forest's heart? Too big. Perhaps a bear? Not wide enough. Despite his fear, Tolman was almost bursting with curiosity. Then the creature stepped into the moonlight, and the Hobbit knew he had not *really* been afraid in the moments before.

It was the size of a small cherry tree. Grey scales covered its two trunk-like legs, and glaring red eyes stared from its misshapen head. Tufts of bristly hair sprouted from the monster's knobby skull, and fangs as long as Tolman's index finger protruded from its mouth. The Hobbit squeezed his own eyes shut. When he opened them, the Stone Troll was gone.

Tolman stayed absolutely still for a long time. The moon's lower edge sprang free of the earth, the full orb sailing skyward. A hawk circled. The shadows of the Chetwood trees receded from the road to lurk among their roots. Tolman let his breath go, then stepped gingerly onto the road. Nothing happened. Gripping his walking stick tightly, he strode briskly back toward home.

Unfortunately, he was not destined to reach the comfort of his patchwork-covered bed. No monstrous Troll appeared to savage him, but Holfast Bunce, the older of the two town Shirriffs, and Nat Groathusk, one of the Big Folk, awaited the Hobbit at the Westgate.

"What in Bree, Staddle, Archet, and Combe!" exclaimed Tolman. His relief was short lived.

"Mr. Greenthumb, you're arrested on the charge of Poaching," announced Holfast, looking acutely uncomfortable. "You'll have to come with me to the lockhouse until the truth of the matter has been sifted."

Tolman laughed in disbelief. It seemed that he'd strayed into a nightmare. First Trolls and now an arrest! "Uncle Hol, it's late and I'm tired and would much prefer my own Hobbit-hole. Let's talk all of this over in the morning. There must be some mistake!"

Nat Groathusk sneered and stepped forward. "That's what you'd prefer, but some of us know why it's late and you're tired, even if others of us are blind. There's sheep missing, Tom Greenthumb! And only one person in Bree who keeps odd hours! I'd like a peek in your larder, I would. Salted mutton and a lot of it is what I'd find, you little sneak!"

Tolman burst into speech: "You'll find salted mutton — and jellied mutton and smoked mutton, too, no doubt — in a larder, Nat Groathusk, but it won't be mine. Uncle Hol, I think I saw a Troll!"



Holfast waved an impatient hand. "Tolman, I know you haven't been poaching sheep. So do Hending Broadtunnel, Erling Underbluff, Moro Boskholm, Harry Oatstone, Henry Reedpipe, and many others I could name. But Nat Groathusk, Gil Mossgrave, and some others *don't* know that. The bed in the lockhouse is comfortable, the food is plentiful and tasty, and you'll be out in a few days. And, if any more sheep go missing while you're there, your name will be cleared nice and easy. Let's not stand here arguing."

Knowing his uncle to be as stubborn as he was kind-hearted, Tolman sighed and went with him without further ado. Although bars secured its windows the lockhouse was actually a wing built onto the cottage that was Holfast's home. His wife (and Tolman's aunt), Myrtle Bunce, brought Tolman a supper of fried mushrooms, and sent their young son, Milo, to carry a note from Tolman to his sister, Lily.

*Lily, dearest,*

*I'm quite fine, but there seems to be the most execrable misunderstanding here. Nat Groathusk and Gil Mossgrave have accused me of poaching sheep, and our Uncle Hol insists on keeping me in the lockhouse for a few days, until the utter ridiculousness of the accusation is clear.*

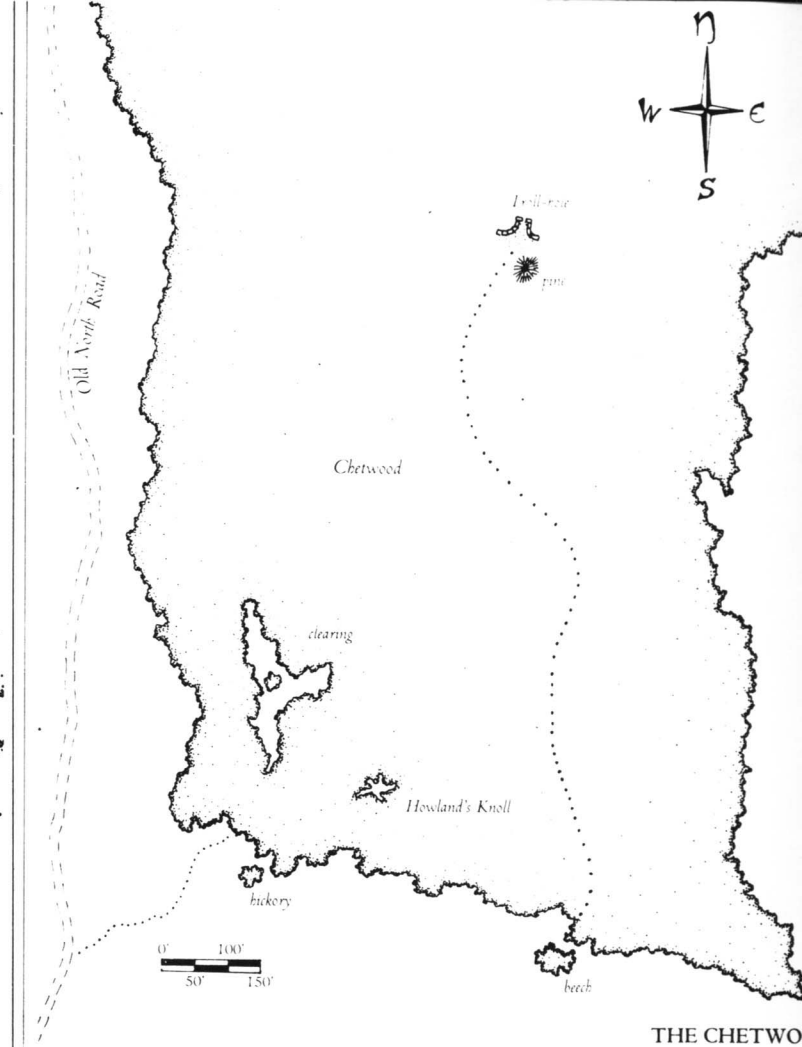
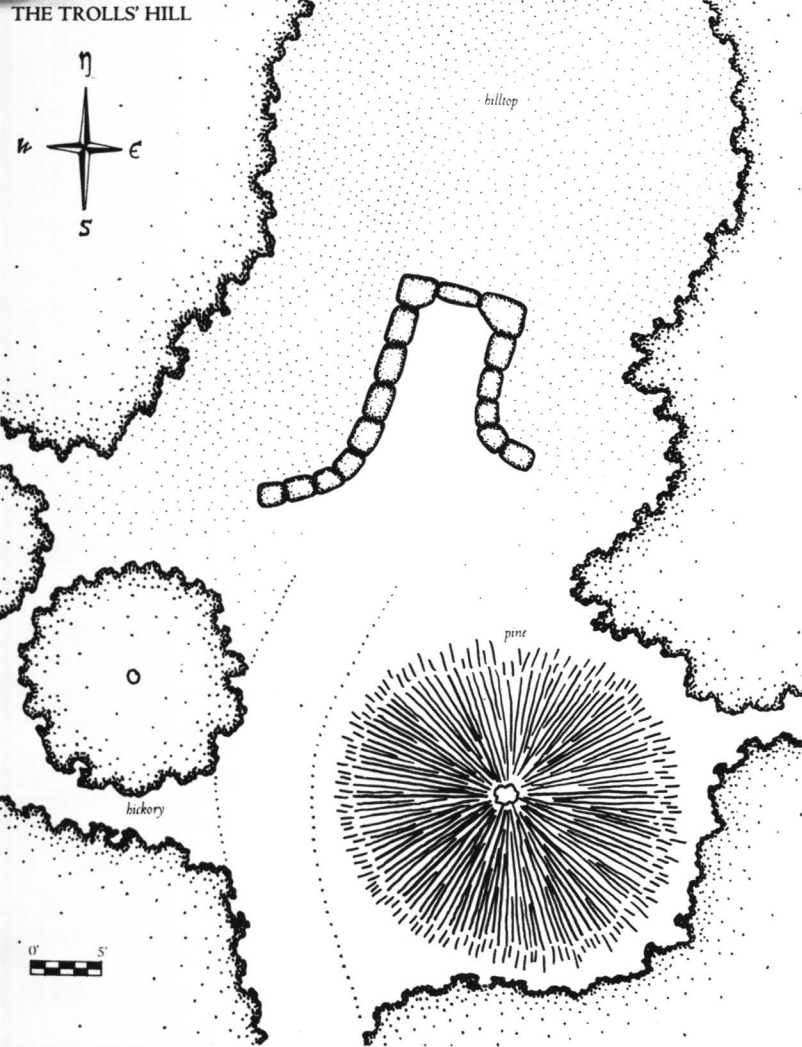
*But, Lily, I can't afford to wait that long. I **did** find the cause of the missing sheep. There's a Troll at large! You must contact our friends — Gláin, Rilwen, and Tatharina — and have them get me out of here. Perhaps a sneaky approach at my window in the wee hours would work. Tell Gláin to bring a screwdriver to remove the bars. I remain your affectionate brother,*

*Tolman*

Provided with ample quilts, a pitcher of water, and some biscuits, Tolman resigned himself to the situation and settled down for a nap. It would surely be at least an hour before his friends arrived.

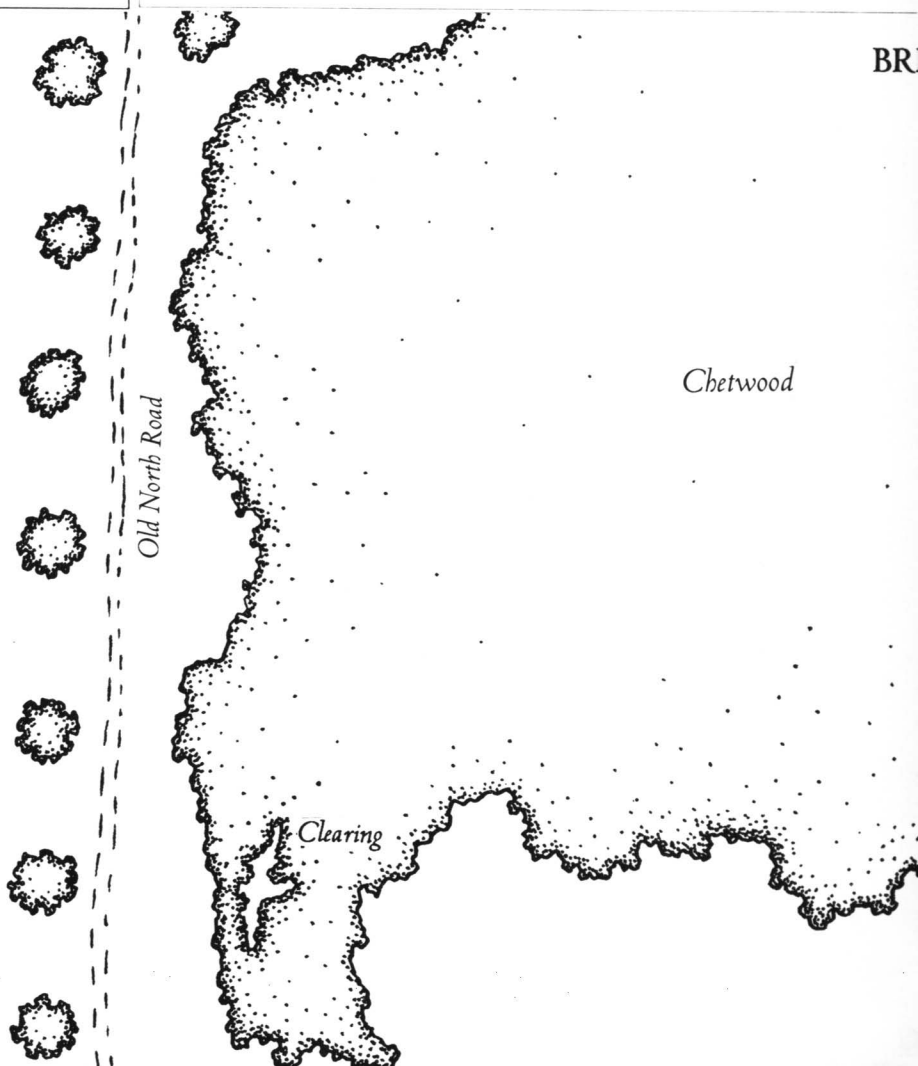


THE TROLLS' HILL

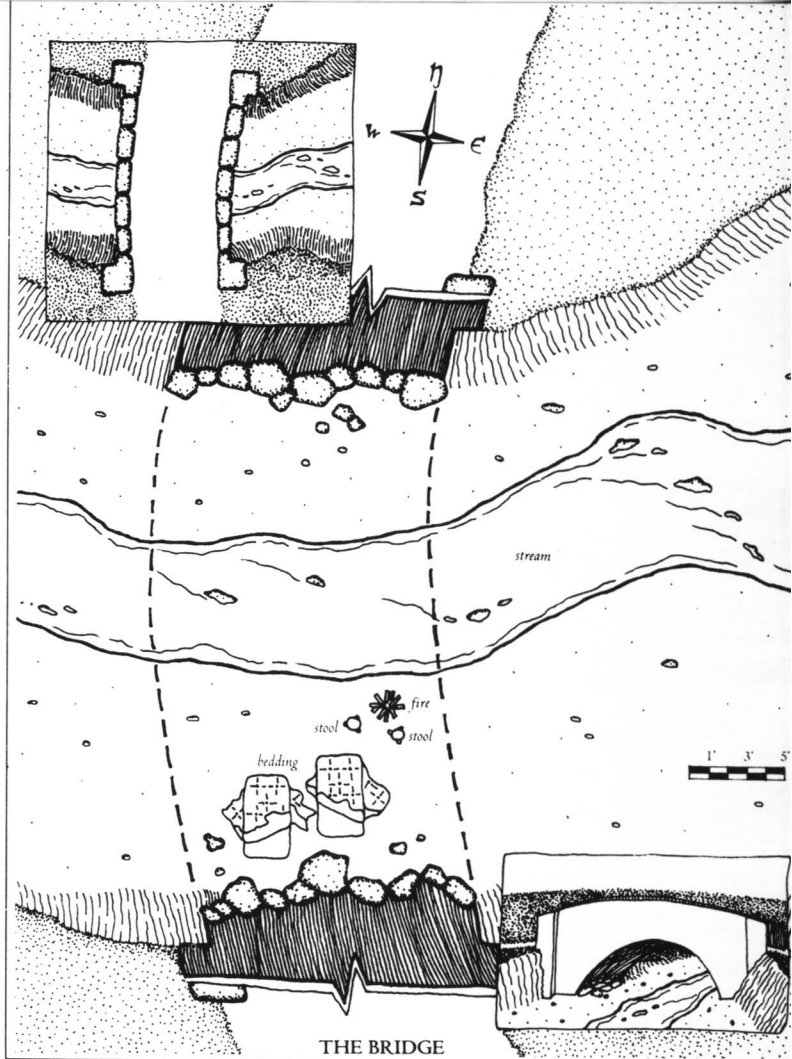
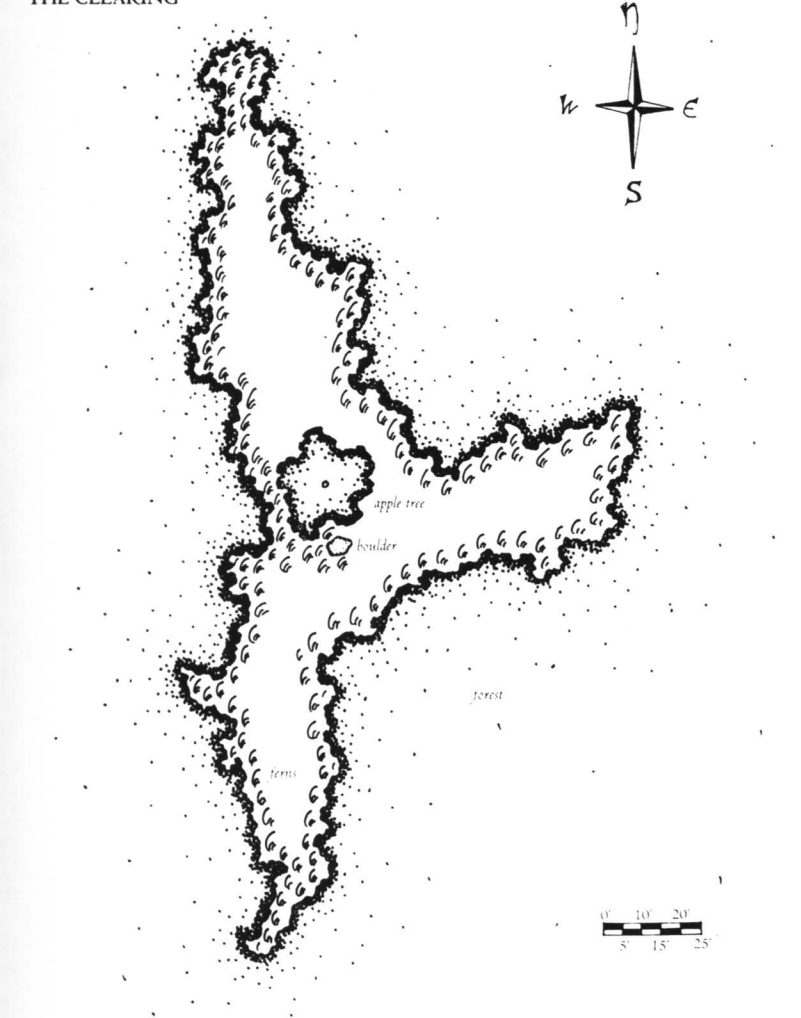


THE CHETWOOD

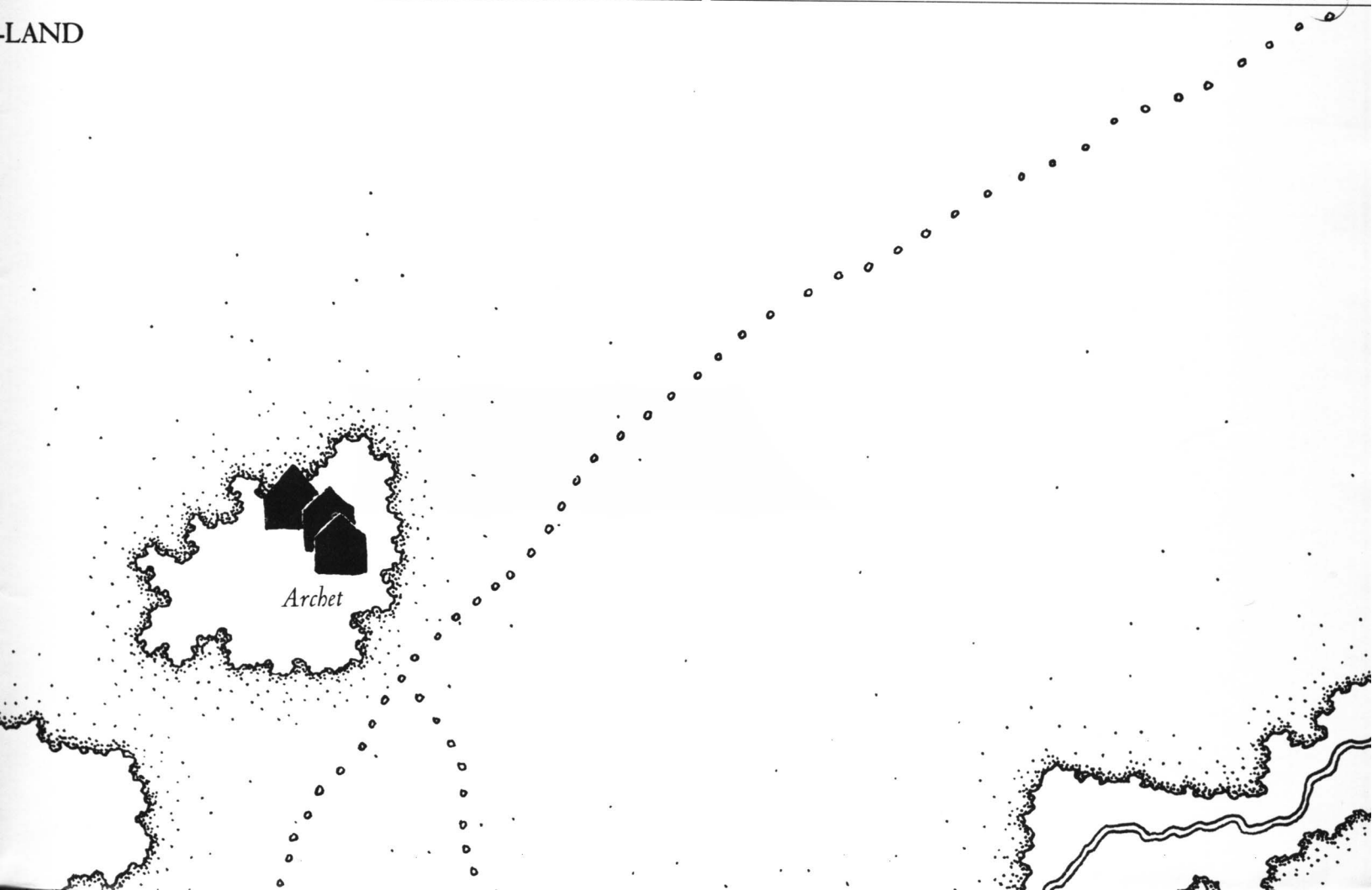
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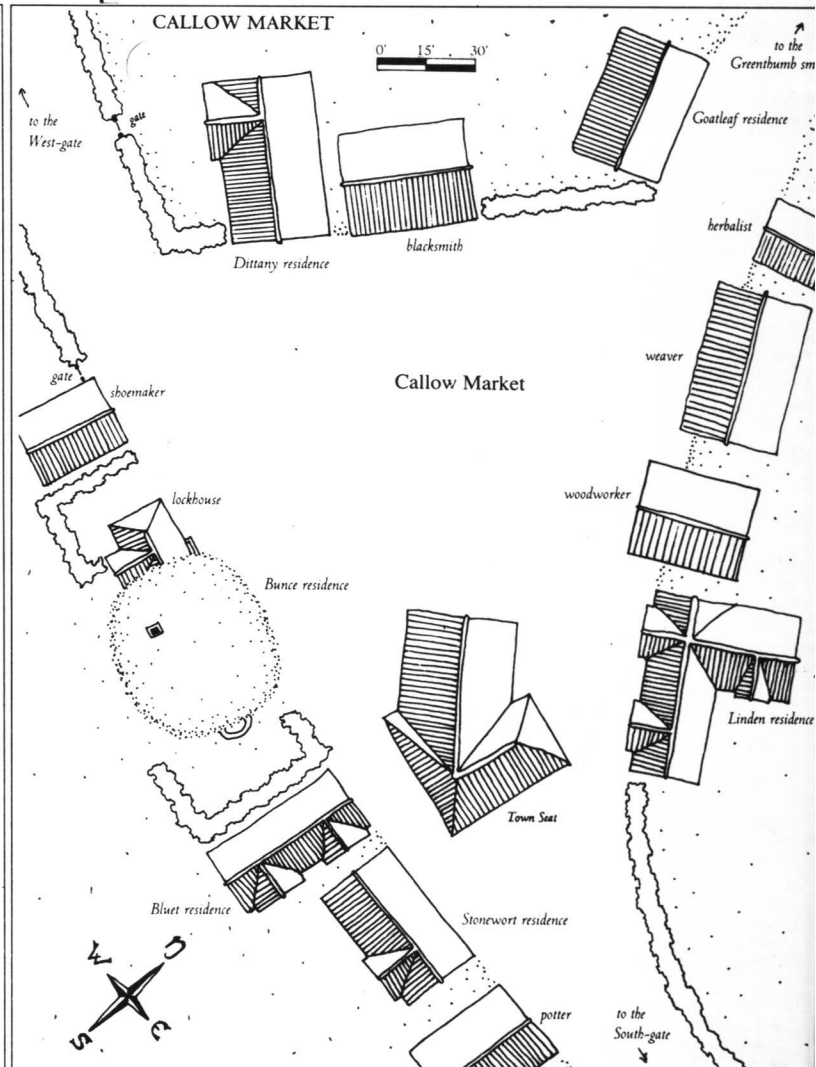
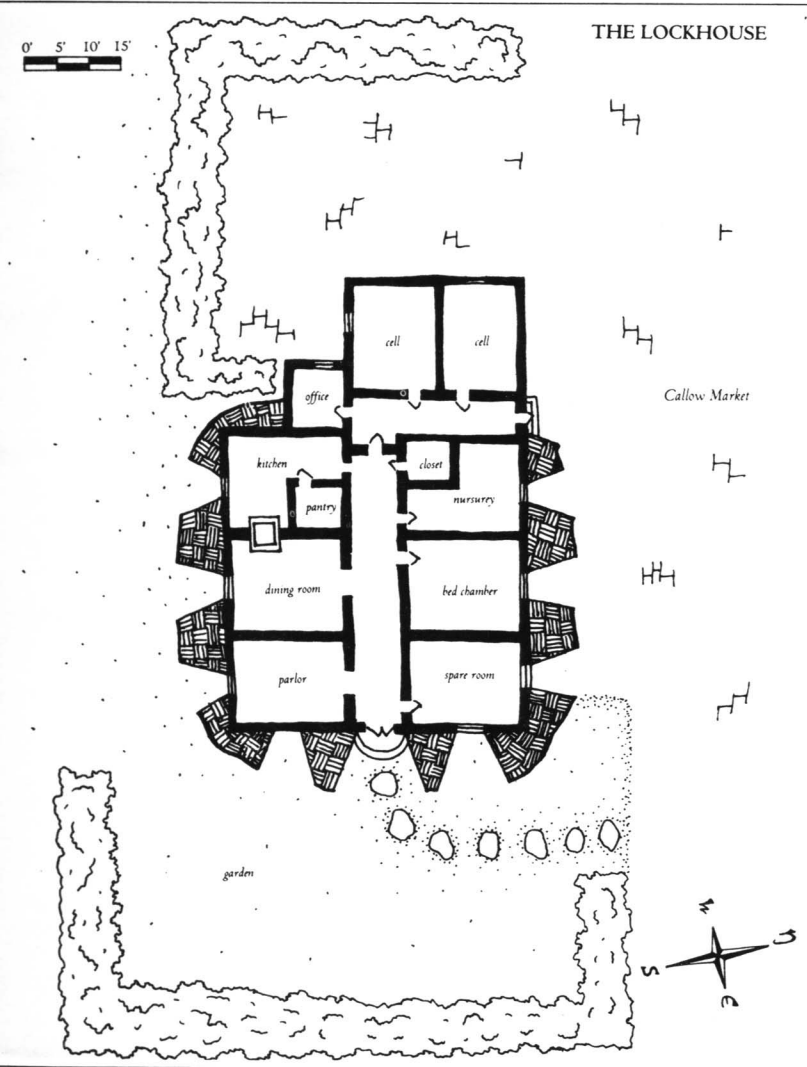
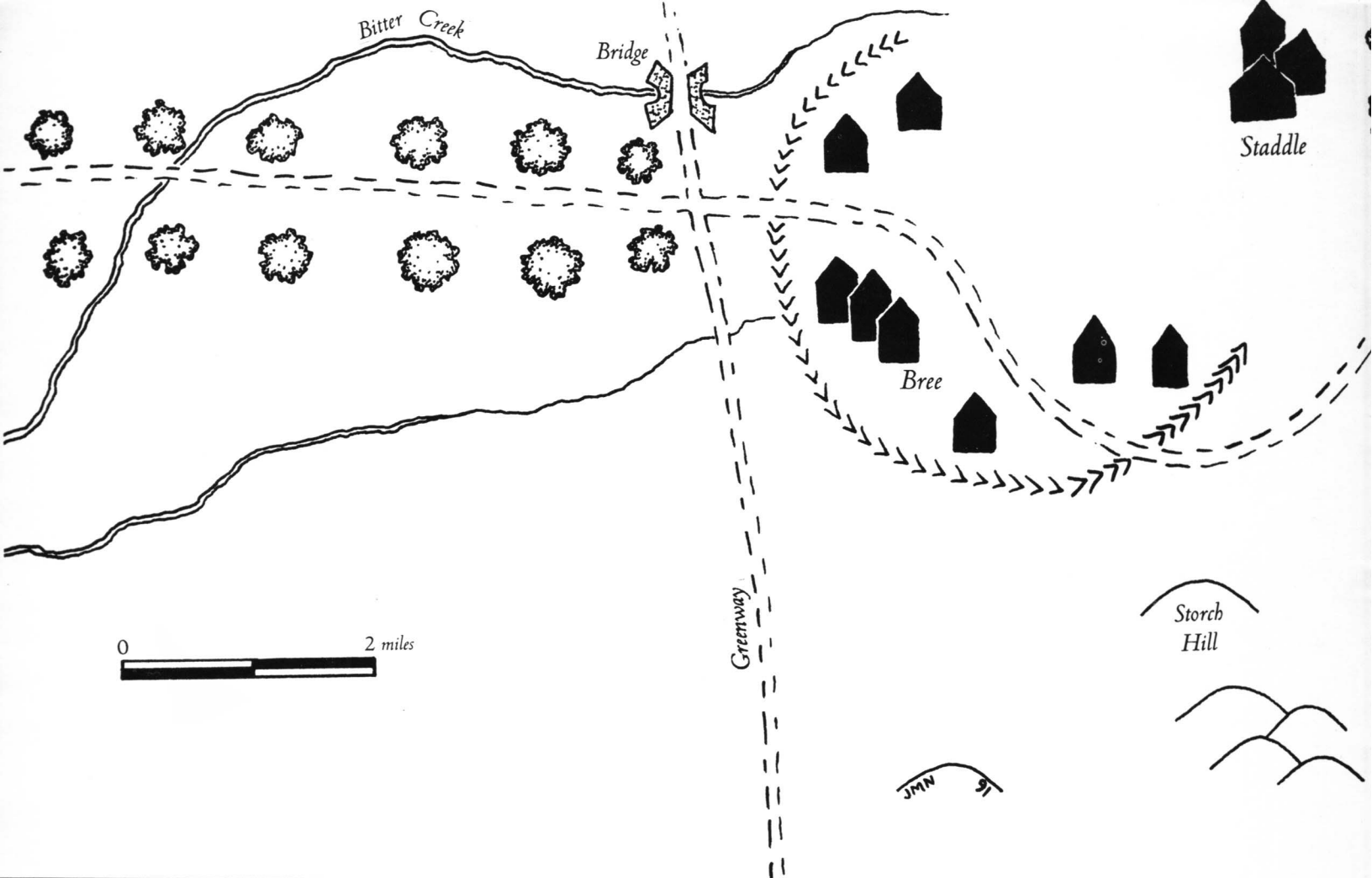


# THE CLEARING

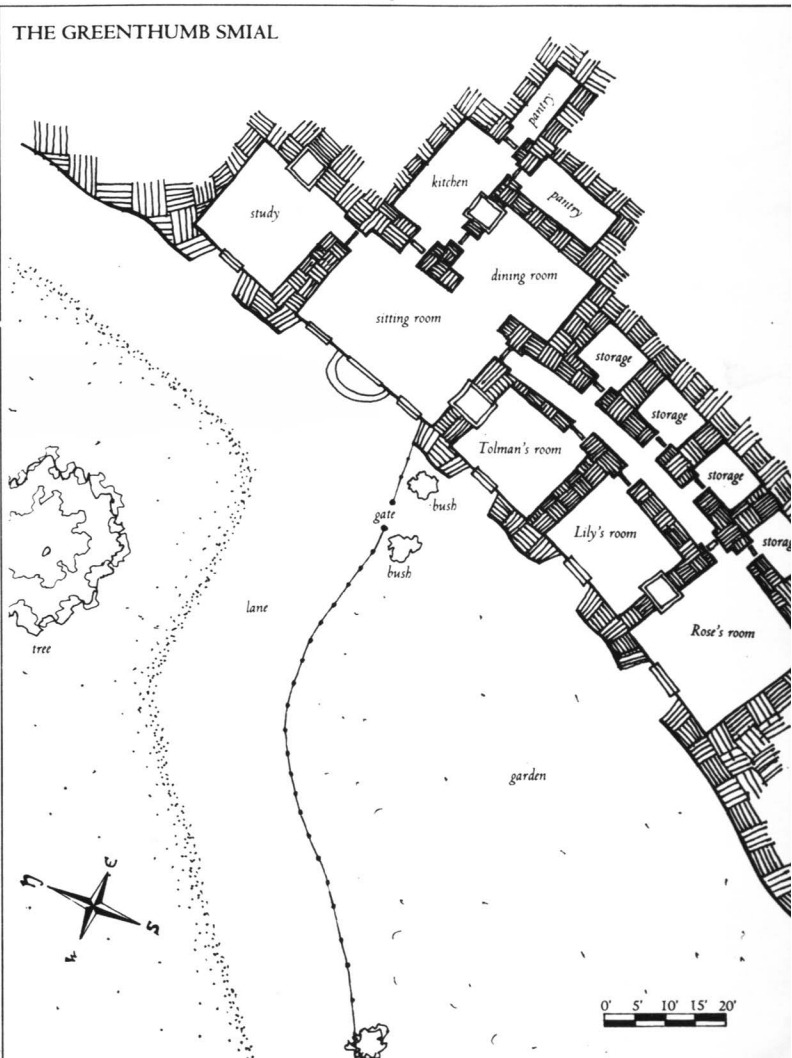
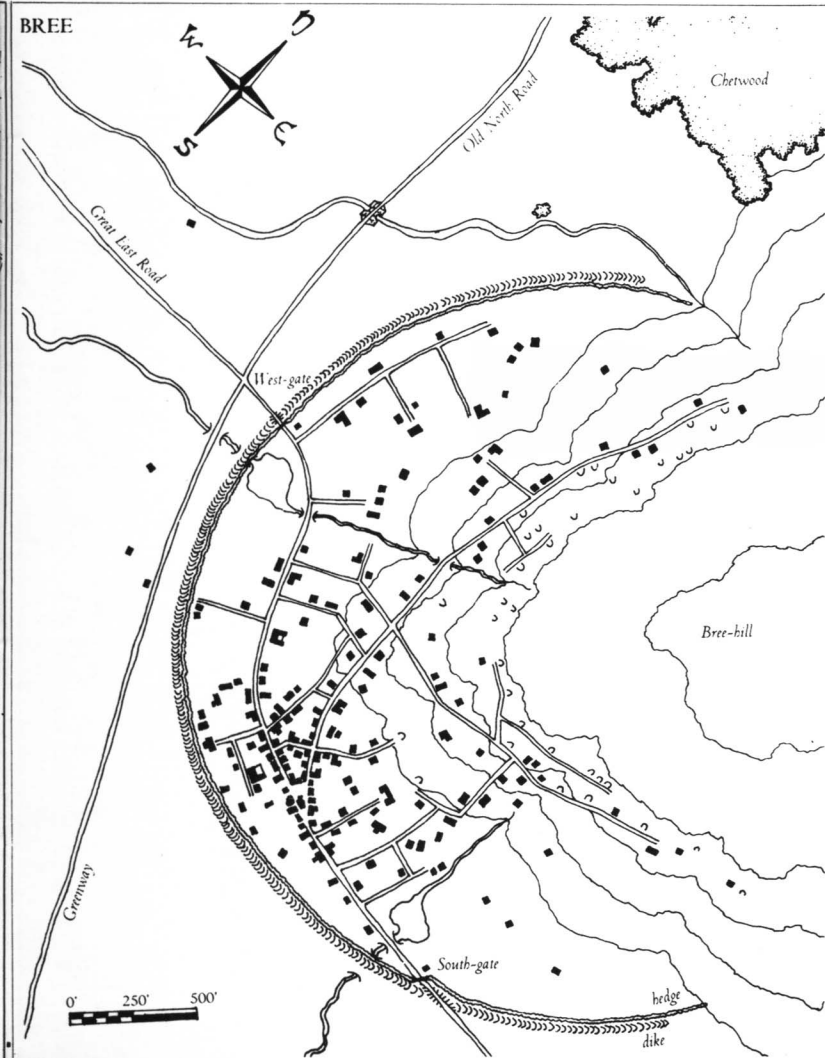
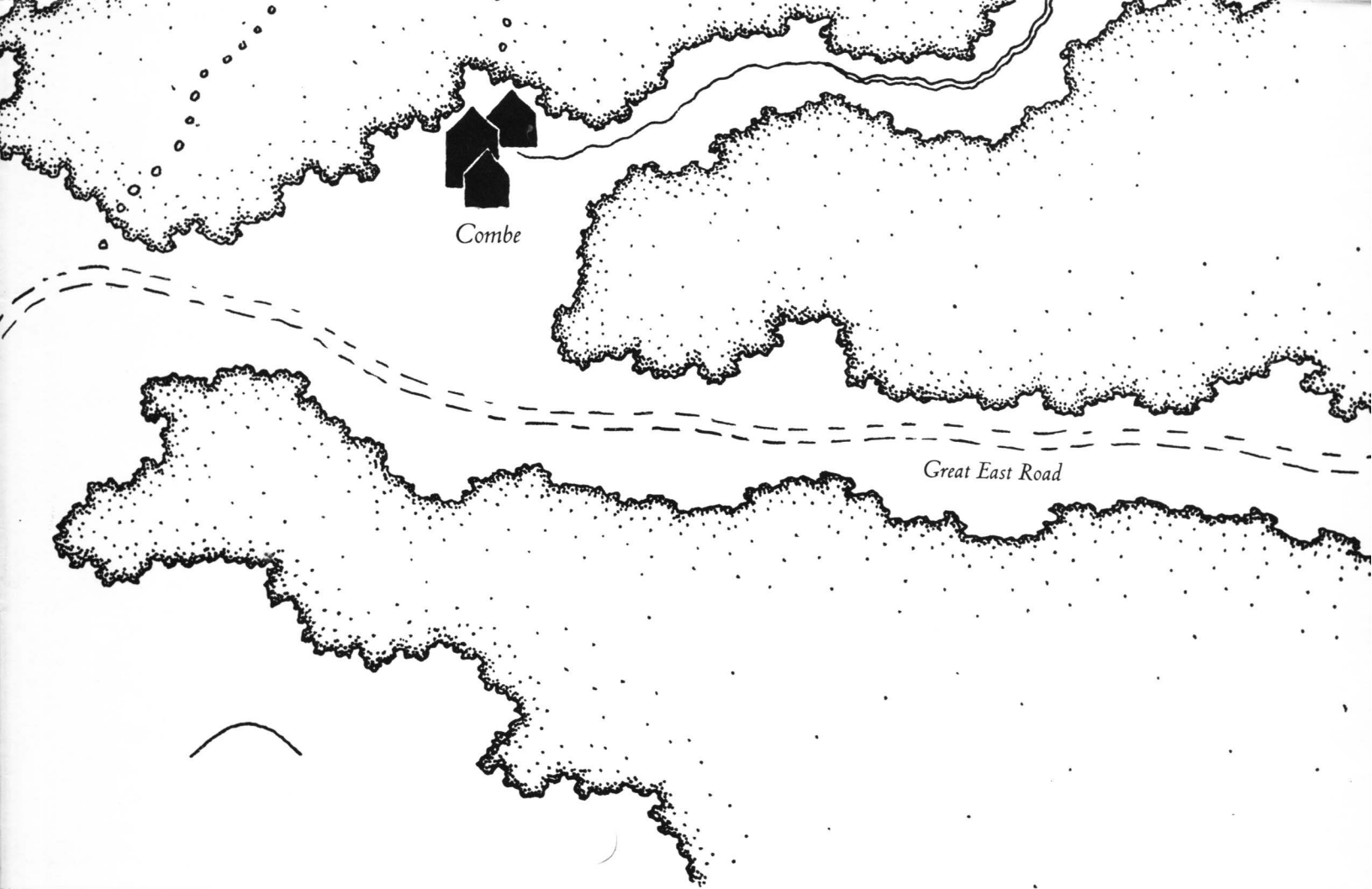


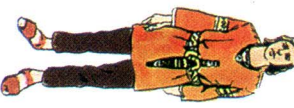



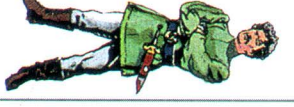


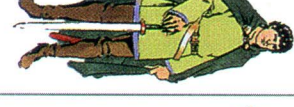





















# LAND







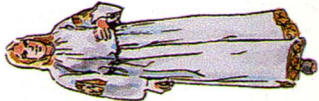










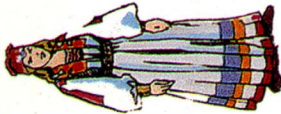
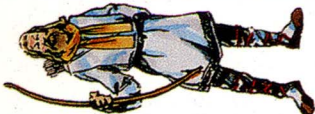
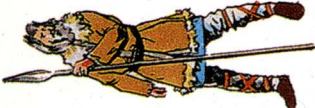




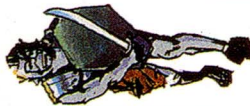
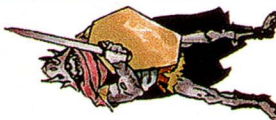












														
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AURIA	DÜRMEGIL	MORAQLAR	TATHARIEL	CELEBORN	GALADRIEL	ULZOG	GUBAL	ULTHAK	SNARAK	ORGASH	GALORANNA	MURLAGA	HOLG	GRSHA
														
WIDUSUNTHA	THANAGRIM	HAITAGAN	BORCCARED	DAGOG	GALKUR	GRATH	ZURGA	RULGOR	NARAG	KALAMIRE	EIROND	BRUAD	GISULF	ATHAULF
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Magical .....4	Magical .....5	Magical .....4	Magical .....4	Magical .....4	Magical .....4	Magical .....4	Magical .....0	Magical .....3	Magical .....1	Magical .....3	Magical .....1	Magical .....2	Magical .....1	Magical .....2
Endurance .....69	Endurance .....40	Endurance .....69	Endurance .....40	Endurance .....69	Endurance .....40	Endurance .....69	Endurance .....0	Endurance .....3	Endurance .....1	Endurance .....3	Endurance .....1	Endurance .....2	Endurance .....1	Endurance .....2



A sword rang as it was drawn. "Do what you will; but I will hinder it, if I may."

"Hinder me? Thou fool. No living man may hinder me!"

Then Merry heard of all sounds in that hour the strangest. It seemed that Dernhelm laughed, and the clear voice was like the ringing of steel. "But no living man am I! You look upon a woman. Éowyn am I, Éomund's daughter. You stand between me and my lord and kin. Begone, if you be not deathless! For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him."

— J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King*\*

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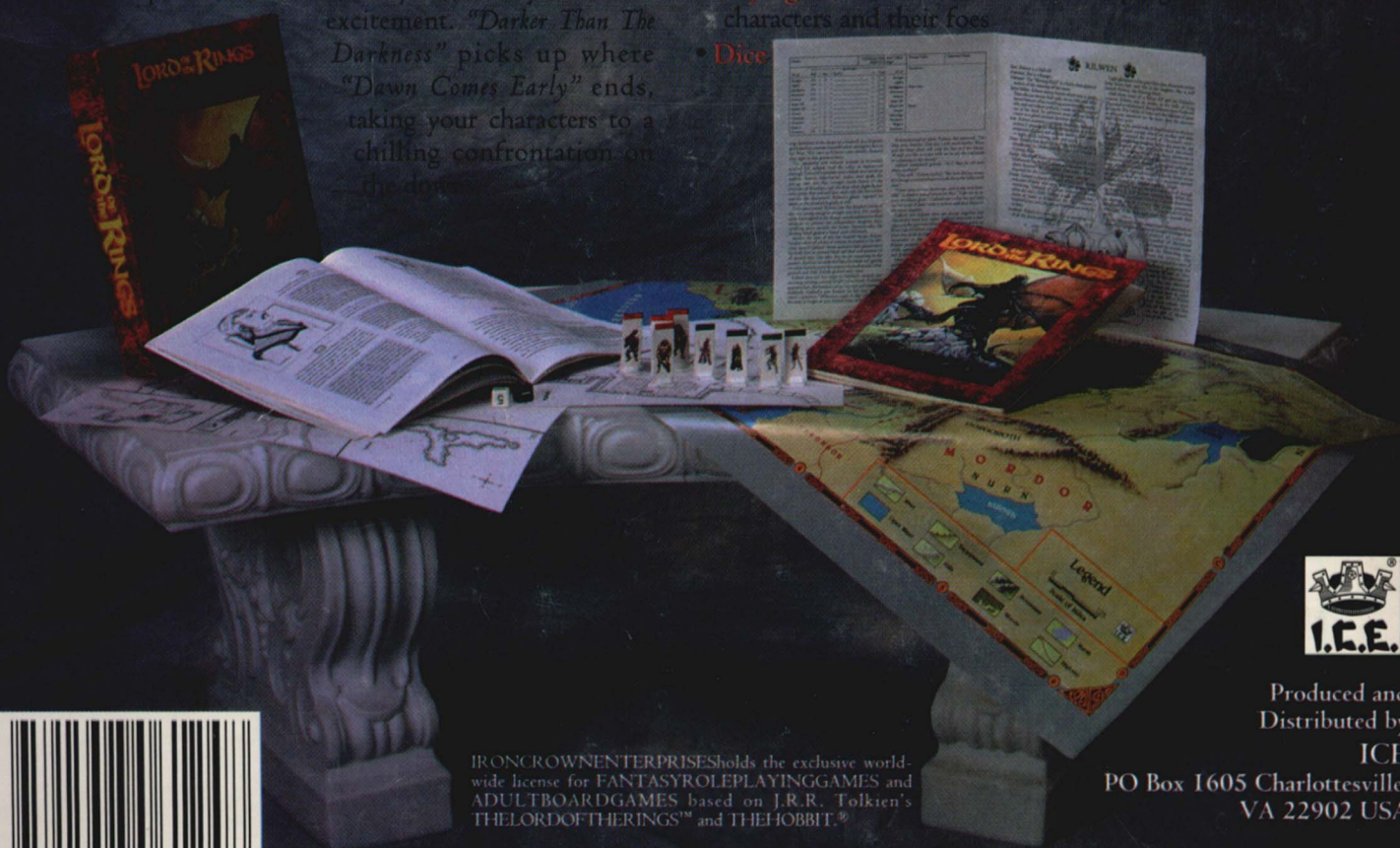
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